The Symbiotic Relationship Between
Klimt and the Bourgeoisie
for the Development of Artistic Identity

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Introduction

Fin-de-siècle Vienna was a hotbed of cultural activity with an ethnically diverse population because it was the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This turbulent time in history led to the formation of the Vienna Secession, which was supported by members of the Jewish bourgeoisie and led by the painter Gustav Klimt.[1] The artist-patron relationship between Klimt and his benefactors was a` symbiotic partnership that fostered the development of Klimt's painting style while expressing the cultural and intellectual identities of his patrons, most of whom were *bourgeois* and Jewish. Gustav Klimt was able to modernize his painting style because of the financial and intellectual support of his wealthy patrons, and I posit that they used Klimt as a vehicle of expression for their economic and cultural power.

Fin-de-siècle Vienna was an oxymoronic phenomenon; the Nationalist movement gained control over Austrian government at the same time that the Modernist movement flourished part due to the antagonistic political atmosphere, which forced members of the Liberal party to retreat into the private, aesthetic sphere. This aesthetic sphere was world in which artistic, literary, and musical culture was able to flourish away from the conservative and anti-modern public and with the financial support of individuals from many of the Jewry and the *bourgeoisie*, who used their new money to commission modern art.

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[1] Carl E. Schorske. "Grace and the Word: Austria's Two Cultures" in *Thinking with History: Explorations in the Passage to Modernism*. (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1998). 125-140.

The Austrian Habsburg Empire lasted from the sixteenth-century until the Great War, with a long legacy of feudal systems and absolute rulership that kept Austria within the realm of pre-modernity until the mid-nineteenth century.[2] An influx of immigrants from other regions in the Empire led to social unrest and an increasingly Nationalist atmosphere.[3] It was during this same time that Gustav Klimt was developing his personal painting style. He was moving away from the academic historical paintings supported by the Academy of Fine Art, and towards a Modern style. Klimt, along with fellow progressive artists, formed and led the Vienna Secession art movement.[4] The Vienna Secession was formed in 1897 by Gustav Klimt, Josef Hoffman, and other avant-garde painters and interior designers, who wanted to liberate art from the constraints of traditional historic art. The Secession fostered the development of philosophical style than an artistic style because they sought to free the modern man through art, rather than free art itself.

The Austrian government celebrated Klimt's work until 1901, when his controversial murals for the University of Vienna led to the widespread condemnation of the artist's governmental patronage.[5] The University paintings were condemned for their eroticism and irrationality because of the symbolism Klimt infused into the subjects. After this event, Klimt

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[2] Michael Burri. "Theodor Herzland Richard von Schaukal: Self-Styled Nobility and the Sources of Bourgeois Belligerence in Prewar Vienna," in *Rethinking Vienna 1900,* ed. Steven Beller. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 108.

[3] Robert Waissenberger, *Vienna: 1890-1920* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc. 1984), 18.

Ziaja Luia. "On the Women's Question in Vienna around 1900: Gender Asymmetries, Emancipation Efforts and Uprisings,"in *The Women of Klimt, Schiele and Kokoschka,* ed. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jane Kallir, and Alfred Weidinger. (Munich" Prestel, 2015). 9.

[4] Gotfried Flield, *Gustav Klimt*. (Cologne: Taschen, 1997). 60

[5] Carl E. Schorske. *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture.* (New York: Random House, 1981) 246.

began producing works with the fiscal support of individuals from the Jewry, who used their

new money to commission modern art.

History of Nineteenth Century Austria

Vienna served as the capital of the Habsburg Monarchy from 1520 until 1918, when

World War I fractured the expansive Empire.[6] The Habsburg Monarchy controlled Austria,

Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine,

Belgium, and parts of Italy at the end of the eighteenth century. By the *fin-de-siècle,* the Empire

lost its territories in Italy and Belgium. The Empire shifted from an aristocratic-centric society to

an "urban civil society" during the Industrial Revolution with the formation of the middle-class

and increased urbanization of Vienna.[7]

The 1848 Revolutions, which were either nationalist or populist driven, weakened the

Habsburg Empire. Non-German ethnic populations in the Empire demanded economic, cultural,

and political equality to the ethnically German imperial subjects, who traditionally were seen as

the real ethnicity of the Empire.[8] Austro-German nationalism arose during the mid-nineteenth

century revolutions amongst the German speaking population in the Empire with the

movement for the unification of Germany.[9] The German nation-state was formed by 1866,

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[6] Pieter M. Judson. "Austria-Hungary." In *Europe 1789-1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of Industry and Empire*, edited by John Merriman and Jay Winter, 137-147. Vol. 1. (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006.) *Gale Virtual Reference Library* (accessed January 29, 2018). http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3446900054/GVRL?u=vic_wlu&sid=GVRL&xid=c9d4a3a9.

[7] Ibid, 9.

[8] Jan Vermeiren, "Germany, Austria, and the Idea of the German Nation, 1871-1914," *History Compass* 9, no. 3 (March 1, 2011): accessed January 29, 2018, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2010.00758.x/full. 201.

[9] The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Revolutions of 1848," from *Encyclopedia Britannica.* Published December 27, 2017. Accessed January 29, 2018.

which was united through a common ethno-cultural identity and supported an anti-Semitic and

anti-clerical society in celebration German values, such as Protestantism and cultural

homogeneity.[10] Austria was not annexed into the German state even though a majority of the

Austro-German population felt more politically and culturally connected to the German State

than to the multi-ethnic and linguistic Habsburg Empire.[11] Austria felt like they were left out of

the German nation-state despite their German culture and traditions, creating a cultural crisis

and anxiety.

The middle class, a large portion was Jewish, was emerging amid the chaos of the

revolutions and weakening of the Empire. Emperor Joseph II passed the Edict of Tolerance in

1782 that allowed the Jewry to attend schools and universities and open factories or become

merchants, though with the requisite that the Jews adopt German as their language in

replacement of Yiddish. The Edict was a catalyst for the social assimilation of Jews into the

Habsburg Empire. Textiles, weapons, and other wartime commodities by industrialists during

the Napoleonic Wars and then by the 1848 revolts.[12]

Many Jewish industrialists attempted to use their economic growth to assimilate into

mainstream Austrian society through politics and culture[13] Joseph II ennobled 116 Jews for

their support during the war, furthering their social standing in the Empire within the upper

class.[14] As the bourgeoisie grew some families were given the rank of the lower aristocracy, but

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[10] Vermeiren, 203.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Hilde Spiel. *Vienna's Golden Autumn: 1866-1938.* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987).
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[13] Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State
University of New York Press, 1983). 195.
[14] Spiel, 40.

many held onto their middle-class status because "they were all highly respected, full of civic

pride and contemptuous of feudalism, which in this new liberal age seemed to be played

out."[15] The retaining of middle-class identity and values by the *nouveau riche* created a

dissonance within the aristocratic Austrian society, which was "marked by pre-democratic

authority systems, pre-bourgeois elites, and 'archaic' mentalities."[16] Members of the Jewish

middle-class were Liberal and viewed themselves morally and politically in contrast to the

aristocracy, as they were contemptuous of the latter's absolute rule, decadent spending, and

unearned political and social standing.[17] The Liberal middle-class championed the value of

individualism over ethnic or class loyalties, for the "universal emancipation of humanity"

through rationalism, intellectual growth, and political participation within a classless society.[18]

A moderate government was formed in the 1860s because Emperor Francis Joseph

granted political concessions to the Left in order to avoid another revolt. The Empire was

vulnerable because of fiscal disasters from the Crimean War and battling a rebellion in

Piedmont-Sardinia, as well as the Hungarian subjects refusing to pay their taxes, leaving the

Empire almost bankrupt. The emperor gave up his absolute rule; Hungary was acknowledged as

a separate monarchical regime and a constitutional government was implemented in Austria.[19]

The liberal bourgeoisie now gained political power and sought to govern Austria with liberal

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[15] Ibid, 42.
[16] Burri*,* 107.
[17] Spiel, 42.
Imke Meyer. "The Insider as Outsider: Representations of the Bourgeoisie in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna." Pacific Coast Philology 44, no. 1. 3.
[18] Pieter M. Judson. "Rethinking the Liberal Legacy," in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, ed. Steven Beller. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001). 65.
[19] Ibid.

institutional and economic reforms.[20] The liberal government wanted to create a universal

Austrian identity that was driven by diversity and religious freedom rather than nationalist

German loyalties.[21] The Austrian far-right saw the Liberals as traitors because they celebrated a

secular multi-national state rather than a German state that was led with Roman Catholic

authority, which was engrained in the Habsburg Empire.[22] The liberal era was short-lived

because of an economic crash in 1873, caused by the liberal reforms and exasperated by

overexpansion and speculation scandals about the liberal political elite.[23] German Liberals

continued to control parliament until the 1879 election, when Francis Joseph and Conservatives

formed a government coalition to push Liberals out of power.[24]

The Austrian working class and middle-class defined themselves through Catholicism

and pro-Empire beliefs and wanted a political voice in the liberal government, that they

believed was unfairly benefitting the *bourgeoisie* and the Jews and not them. The change in

Austria's social order and its new Liberal government were not benefitting the Austro-German

lower middle and working classes, and instead were exploited by the mid-century infrastructure

and building program which symbolized the modern and enlightened path that Vienna was

believed to be following.[25] Vienna's renovation into a modern society only benefitted the

bourgeoisie and nobility, placing the working-class to the periphery of society. The Jews and the

upper echelons of the bourgeoisie reaped the benefits of the constitutional monarchy, leading

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[20] Schorske, "Grace and the Word," 129.
[21] Judson, 68.
[22] Schorske. *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*. 117.
[23] Ibid, 143.
Meyer, 1-2.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ziaja, 11.

the working class and Catholic artisan and professional classes to feel betrayed by the

alienation and lack of enfranchisement in their country. A large portion from the Austro-

German community and the Conservative party viewed the Jewry to be a separate and lesser

ethnic population and the Liberal party to be traitors because they supported immigration so

Austria could become a multi-national secular state rather than a Catholic German state.[26] The

deeply Catholic working-classes were concerned that Austria would lose its religious and

German values and cultures and be replaced by an amoral and weak culture that was led by

Jewish industrialists, whom regarded as too feminine and weak.

The rise of the Christian Social Party and the German Nationalist party gained support

from the Catholic artisan and working classes who feared that the Liberals were too anti-clerical

and secular during a period when poor Jewish and Slavic people were emigrating from Eastern

Europe to Vienna.[27] The German Nationalist party, formed in 1882 by Georg von Schonerer,

avidly promoted anti-Semitism and the purity of the Austro-German race; Schonerer was

disillusioned by liberalism early in his political career because of the Liberals' inaction towards

social problems and Slavic nationalism.[28] Karl Lueger founded the Christian Social Party in 1887,

following Schonerer through their fellow disillusionment with the Liberal party because of its

alliance with the Jewish bourgeoisie, leading him to take an anti-Semitic and anti-capitalist

(terms that were considered synonymous with each other) stance.[29] Aristocrats and Catholic

middle-class and artisans supported the Christian Social Party, leading Lueger to be elected

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[26] Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,* 117.
[27] Ibid, 118.
[28] Ibid, 120-125.
[29] Ibid,, 138-139.

mayor of Vienna 1895. The German Nationalist and Christian Social parties found support

among the universities, creating a hostile environment for Jews. This was a turning point for the

liberal bourgeoisie, who now were shuttered out of political participation, while far-right

political groups started to grow. Austrian Nationalists linked the decline of Austria with the

economic rise of Jews leading anti-Semitism to become rampant in Vienna.[30]

Literature Review

Klimt's importance within *fin-de-siècle* Vienna has been accepted within different

disciplines; this gave me a wide range of information and interpretations on Klimt, the Vienna

Secession, and the cultural phenomena of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Carl Schorske's *Fin-de-Siècle*

Vienna, originally published in 1979, offered information on a wide breadth of subjects,

including the Austrian government, Klimt and the Secession, Schoenberg, Freud, and other

important Viennese figures. [31] *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* is a collection of eight essays which all focus

on the interrelationship between culture and war in Vienna between 1848 and 1914. The

breakdown of Liberalism in Austria, leading to anti-Semitism and anti-Slavism and anti-

rationalism is traced through historical events and cultural changes that developed in the latter

half of the nineteenth century, which gave me the essential framework for my thesis.

"The Insider as Outsider: Representations of the Bourgeoisie in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna" by

Imke Meyer gave me direction in the early stages of my research, as well, because it filtered the

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[30] Tag Gronberg. "The Inner Man: Interiors and Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century Vienna." *Oxford Art Journal* 24, no. 1 (2001): 67-88. Accessed September 20, 2017. doi:10.1093/oaj/24.1.67. 73.
Meyer, 2
[31] Carl E. Schorske. *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture.* (New York: Random House, 1981).

information from Schorske's *Fin-de-Siècle.*[32] The subject of this essay is the bourgeoisie and

their literary representations following the bourgeoisie's loss of political power. Meyer notes

that the bourgeoisie still had their economic and social power, which they could assert to be

influencers in Vienna's artistic culture. This led me to think about how Klimt maintained his

artistic power following the public denunciation of a series of murals for the University of

Vienna, despite losing his position within the Austrian government.

To further shape my argument, I referred to the plethora of essays and books written on

the Jewish bourgeoisie and their role the development of Secessionist art. These works discuss

the artistic, social, and romantic relationships between Klimt and his models, patrons, and

peers. Although the Jewish bourgeoisie's role in financially supporting the Viennese Secession

has been widely accepted within the academic community, I wanted to look deeper into the

relationship between Klimt and his patrons (who were almost only members Jewish middle-

class) and to see how the effects of the latter's liberalism had on Klimt's art, especially in his

representations of women.

The Women of Klimt, Schiele and Kokoschka, edited by Agnes Husslein-Arco, Jane Kallir,

and Alfred Weidinger, is a collection of essays with a competing range of opinions and

methodologies.[33] Jane Kallir's "Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka: Men Looking at

Women Looking at Men" places Klimt within the "sexist" side of the ongoing discussion of

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[32] Imke Meyer. "The Insider as Outsider: Representations of the Bourgeoisie in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna." Pacific Coast Philology 44, no. 1 (2009).
[33] Agnes Husslein-Arco. "*The Women of Klimt, Schiele and Kokoschka.*" (Munich: Prestel, 2015).

Klimt's relationships with women.[34] Kallir claims that Klimt depicted female sexuality within

Freud and Weininger's terms by neutralizing "the power of female lust" and forcing the nude

models into passivity through their supine positions and "near catatonic obliviousness" in his

private erotic drawings of masturbating women. She both describes Klimt's nude drawings as

passive and *femme-fatale*. "Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Oskar Kokoschka…" informed my

work because it allowed me to view his works through a different lens and interpretation than

my own which sharpened my argument in opposition to hers.

"Men Looking at Women Looking at Men" by Jane Kallir was formative to developing

my thesis because this argument removes the agency of Klimt's female peers and models by

saying Klimt objectifies women, when Klimt's models and peers his paintings as a critical

progression towards an enlightened representation of female identity and sexuality. Klimt is

expressing the important role that many middle-class ladies had in the development of *fin-de-*

siècle Viennese culture by almost solely painting women in both portrait and allegorical works

and by displaying the socialites' wealth through the intense ornamentation that consumes the

canvas. The Viennese middle-class defined itself in opposition to the conservative aristocracy,

and so Klimt is expressing their opposing identity by taking the traditional portrait, a form of art

that was used to glorify the nobility for centuries, and changing it by abstracting the figural

form and illustrating the sitter's bourgeoisie status and wealth, rather than clearly identifying

the aristocratic position of the sitter.

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[34] Jane Kallir. "Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka: Men Looking at Women Looking at Men," in *Klimt and the Women of Vienna's Golden Age, 1900-1918,* ed. by Tobias G. Natter. (Munich: Prestel, 2016). 176.

Tag Gronberg's "The Inner Man: Interiors of Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century

Vienna" (2001) helped to develop my counterargument to Jane Kallir's essay, "Men Looking at

Women Looking at Men."[35] Gronberg discusses the importance of the interior, both as

figuratively and literally, whether it came in the form of cafes, salons, or the home, in the

formation of Viennese modern culture. Gronberg describes interiority as an "artistic

manifestation of urban modernity"; the Jewish Liberals were pushed out of the public domain

they moved into the private sphere in their efforts to modernize Austria, and Secessionist

interior designs were employed to decorate houses that reflected the bohemian and modern

tastes of the patrons. The private realm now was occupied by women and men, weakening the

gendered dichotomy that was created in the early nineteenth-century. Critics of Klimt have

used his portraits of women in enclosed quarters as proof of his patriarchal oppression, but

Gronberg's essay led me to argue that by placing women within a private setting he is placing

women within the world of modern culture and sublimely illustrating the influence that women

(many of whom he painted) had in *fin-de-siècle* culture.

In line with Gronberg's argument were the large amount of written works on the

significant impact that *salonnières* had on turn of the century Viennese culture. "The Viennese

Women: A Community of Strength" by Jill Lloyd (2016) examines the lives and roles of Viennese

women at the close of the twentieth century.[36] Lloyd's paper provided ample groundwork for

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[35] Tag Gronberg. "The Inner Man: Interiors and Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century Vienna." *Oxford Art Journal* 24, no. 1 (2001): 67-88. Accessed September 20, 2017. doi:10.1093/oaj/24.1.67.

[36] Jill Lloyd. "The Viennese Woman: A Community of Strength." In *Klimt and the Women of Vienna's Golden Age: 1900-1918,* edited by Tobias G. Natter, Marian Bisanz-Prakken, and Ronald S. Lauder. (Munich: Prestel Publishing, 2016).

my thesis to further understand the professional relationship Klimt and women. Lloyd clearly indicates that although Klimt was not a feminist, he surrounded himself with successful professional females who were feminists.   The Secession (which was accused of "feminizing" Austrian culture) and Feminist movements were excluded from the public support as they faced the same critics, leading these two organizations to be "mentioned in the same breath." Lloyd thus confirms that Klimt's works should not be seen within a male-dominated vacuum, but rather in the a-gendered environment that fostered the growth of his art.

Conclusion

My thesis is intended to look at the reasons behind why many figures from the Jewish middle-class supported Gustav Klimt to represent their artistic identities and participation in *fin-de-siècle* Viennese culture. My research began with the one-dimensional focus on Klimt as a degrader and objectifier of women because of the amount of scholarly work that celebrates Klimt as merely a "painter of beautiful women," rather than taking into consideration the complex network of patron and artist. Women's influence in Viennese artistic society is stripped away if we continue to study Klimt's works within the limited frame of information on his life and values, rather than a complex conversation between sexes, classes, and religion. My thesis is intended to bring into consideration these different components that shape society and culture, and to see how Klimt reflects the broader liberal culture in Vienna. Gustav Klimt faced a similar rise and fall in their acceptance by Austrian society. At the turn of the century, the Austrian government sought to bridge the tensions between the conservative Austrians and liberal Jews through implementing conservative economics but commissioning avant-garde art

for public works, separating politics and culture.[37] The artistic culture that grew in *fin-de-siècle*

Vienna was a reaction to being forced outside of the conservative mainstream -- a situation that

was true for both Klimt and the assimilated Jews.[38] I argue that was through this fellow

exclusion from Austrian politics and society that a large number of the Jewish elites saw part of

their "outsider" identities in Klimt because both parties wanted to modernize and liberalize

Vienna society and art.

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[37] Carl Schorske, "Mahler and Klimt: Social Experience and Artistic Evolution." *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 43. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024801.
[38]Robert Waissenberger. "Politics in Vienna Before and After the Turn of the Century." *Vienna, 1890-1920*. (St. Louis: Webster University, 1990). 31.

Chapter 1: Gustav Klimt's Artistic Development

Gustav Klimt's popularity in the Viennese art world is rooted in the Jewish bourgeoisie's rise in economic power, resulting in their dominating role in Viennese modern culture. When examining Klimt's artistic evolution, the modernization of his style grows in accordance with his increased dependency on progressive bourgeois patrons. Klimt's painting evolution shows a major shift in his style as he moved his client base from the Viennese government to private, upper-middle class patrons. Klimt increasingly uses color to create shapes and lines, as well as eliminates the illusion of depth or plasticity within spaces. His private patrons tended to be from the Jewish *bourgeoisie* because of their concerted effort to use their money and efforts to progress culture and art after their political power was taken away, which left them with only their economic power.[39] Klimt's success and legacy as a Modern painter economically and stylistically relied, at least partially, on the economic and social rise of the Jewish middle class while families from the Jewish middle class relied on Klimt to express their artistic identities as supporters of and influential figures in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna art circles. This artistic interdependence stemmed from Klimt's and the Jewry's ostracization by the established Austrian society, who believed that they were corrupting Viennese culture through their perceived femininity and modernity.

Gustav Klimt's painting style developed from the traditional Historic style of the Academy into the avant-garde idiom that he continues to be famous for. The continuous flattening of space, abstraction of form and lines, and other progressive painting methods is

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[39] Meyer, 2.

visible when viewing Klimt's works in chronological order. Klimt was able to develop and modernize his artistic style and identity as he became totally reliant on the private commissions, most from the Jewish bourgeoisie. because they strived to have a Modern artistic identity after they both were shut out of participation in mainstream society, resulting in a symbiotic artist-patron relationship.

Gustav Klimt kept his private life impressively secret and away from the public eye. He never left an autobiography or diary and believed that the artist was insignificant to the appreciation of art. Klimt left a handwritten curriculum vitae of dates and works and gave an interview to Berta Zuckerkandl; otherwise our knowledge of Klimt's personal life is based on second-hand accounts.[40] He left an undated statement of himself saying,

> No self-portrait of me is in existence. I am not interested in myself as the 'subject of a painting'… I am convinced that as a human being I am not particularly interesting… I am not at ease with the spoken word or the written word, even when it comes to expressing something about my work or myself.[41]

 He had a modest upbringing and was born an artisan Austrian family, a far cry from the wealthy patrons with whom he later became identified with. He was trained as a home apprentice and then received a conservative formal education at the School of Arts and Crafts *(Kunstgewerbeschule)* to be an architectural decorator.[42]

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[40] Gerbert Frodl. *Klimt.* Trans. by Alexandra Campbell. (New York: Henry Holt, 1992). 23.
[41] Ibid*,* 12.
[42] Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,* 209.

Gustav Klimt and Imperial Patronage

His graduation coincided with the completion of the Ringstrasse building program,

fiscally supported by the bourgeois buying building lots and led by Emperor Franz Joseph in the

latter half of the nineteenth century.[43] These newly constructed state-own buildings were

designed following Baroque, Neo-Renaissance, Neo-Gothic, and Classic architectural styles,

reflecting the Historical style painting in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts.[44] The Ringstrasse was

Franz Joseph's attempt to improve the Empire's facade and to turn Vienna into a modern

metropolis, rather than the backwards city it actually was because it was ruled by an absolute

ruler and the feudal system that was eliminated by other European countries. Vienna's physical

modernization was a shallow improvement of Vienna, it addressed an infrastructural problem

rather than a societal one, leaving the deeply rooted nationalistic and conservative public

sentiment among the lower classes to fester. Klimt and his brother Ernst, a talented but less

renowned painter, and partner Franz Matsch was commissioned to decorate the Burgtheater

and the Museum of Art History in the late 1880s.[45] Klimt's paintings in the Burgtheater, which

was his first commission, which were completed with his brother and Matsch. They portray

theatrical dramas with their audience from the Greeks to modernity and were produced in an

expressly traditional Classical style.[46] The murals took two years produce; they painted directly

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[43] Ziaja, 10.
[44] Nicholas Parsons. *Vienna: A Cultural History.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). 208-210.
[45] Christian M. Nebehay, *Gustav Klimt: From Drawing to Painting.* (Harry N. Abrams: London, 1992). 23-24.
[46] Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,* 211.

onto the roughcast surface with oil painting.[47] The ceiling painting above the Great Stairway,

Shakespeare's Theater (figure 1) has naturalistic forms and the illusion of depth within the

space. Klimt includes the stage and audience within the composition, cropping out the

audiences' bodies by the elaborate framing device. Klimt creates a sense of depth within the

space, as the viewer's eyes are brought beyond the stage and the figures in the middle ground.

The composition is unbalanced; the cluster of audience members on right is illuminated with

bright highlights and wooden elevated seating, the middle left is heavily shadowed with

diagonals from the two figures center stage. The female figure on center stage appears to

emanate light, while a hooded figure to her right is enveloped in the dark background. The

Queen and her entourage bisect the composition. Klimt used dark reds, bright beiges, and

various values of white and brown within this mural. Forms are built with the use of shadows

and light, giving them an appearance of plasticity and naturalism. *Shakespeare's Theater* shows

the formal training that Klimt received, an example of his works before he developed his highly

ornamental and modern style that we see later in his career. The Burgtheater adheres to the

painting style that the Habsburg Empire and Austrian royalty promoted. Klimt received the

Golden Order of Merit from the Emperor Franz Joseph I in 1888. By the mid 1890s, Klimt's

mastery of Classical style gave way to his involvement in *Die Jungen,* an organization of avant-

garde artists and the precursor to the Secession.

Formation of the Vienna Secession

Klimt formed the Vienna Secession in 1897 to create a new space for artists to display

their works outside of the limiting Academy of Fine Arts; an institution that continued to teach

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[47]Nebehay. 29.

and display Historic paintings grounded in the Old Masters. The Vienna Secession distinguished itself by its break from the past generation of artists, defined by Schorske as "not a mere *salon des refusés,* but as a new Roman *secessio plebis*… defiantly rejecting the misrule of the patricians."[48] The Secessionists strived to represent the modern man and the modern world, free of the inherited society and style that burdened the progression of culture.[49] The Secessionists promoted the philosophy that art should represent the modern man and modern culture, rather than stay in the constraints of traditional historicist art . The House of Secession, designed by Josef Olbrich and financed by Karl Wittgenstein, the Jewish steel tycoon, showing their desire to represent the modern man using movable partitions within the gallery spaces to reflect the "hurrying, scurrying flickering life, whose manifold mirror image we seek in art," as described by one art critic.[50]

The Habsburg Empire supported and celebrated the Vienna Secession because it was the first purely Austrian art. The Art Council was founded in 1899, led by Minister Wilhelm von Hartel, by the state in the desire that art could transcend current problems in Austria by visualizing a national identity that was not rooted in religion, ethnicities, or German culture.[51] The Austrian state wanted to project an image of modernism and progression for the world to see, showing Vienna as a multi-national city where a "thriving artistic life was beginning to

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[48] Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,* 214-215.
Jeroen van Heerde, "The Habsburg State and Gustav Klimt, Scenes from a Fruitful Relationship". In *Klimt's Women*, ed. Tobias G. Natter and Gerbert Frodl. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 18-19.
[49] Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,* 215-217.
[50] Ibid*,* 219*.*
[51] Ibid*,* 235-237.

pulsate in all the regions of our fatherland."[52] Austrian officials nominated several Secessionist

artists to be shown at the 1900 World Exposition in Paris as part of this effort.[53] The

constitutional monarchy had to be suspended and replaced with the Bureaucrat's Ministry in

1900 because of the competing nationalist factions in parliament, such as the Czechs,

Bohemians, Austro-Germans.[54] The new government, led by Ernst von Koerber, sought to

modernize and unite the Austrian Empire economically and culturally.[55] The Vienna Secession

accepted the patronage of the state because they hoped that they could play an influential role

in further progressing Austria into a modern state and away from the intensely conservative

and nationalist environment it had become.[56] The larger Austrian public pushed against the

government's attempts to unify the Empire by accusing the Vienna Secessionists, in particular

Klimt, of feminizing Austria.[57]

The University Paintings and Their Impact on Klimt's Career

The turning point in Klimt's career was the creation and condemnation of his University

Paintings, a series of three paintings that are meant to adorn ceilings in the University of

Vienna. Klimt was commissioned in 1894 by the Ministry of Education to decorate the

university with murals of three of the four faculties of the university; Philosophy, Jurisprudence,

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[52] Address by Wilhelm von Hartel at the 1st Secession of the Arts Council. No. 22591/1900, minutes in the meeting of the Arts Council on 5/25/1901. (Translated by Jeroen van Heerde)
[53] Heerde, 20.
[54] The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Ernest von Koerber," *Encyclopaedia Britannica. (*Chicago: *Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.,* 2018). Last modified February 26, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ernest-von-Koerber.
[55] Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,* 236-238.
[56] Heerde, 20.
[57] Ibid, 23.

and Medicine.[58] These paintings were rejected by the university professors and then acquired

by August Lederer, an important patron of the arts. The Austrian state seized the murals in

1938, though all were destroyed in a fire by the Nazis at the end of the Second World War.[59]

Between 1894 and 1905, when Klimt was producing and showing the murals, the university

faculty and students were criticizing these paintings and Klimt for being too Jewish even though

Klimt was not Jewish.

Based on black and white photographs it appears that *Philosophy* (figure 2) is

compositionally unbalanced, with the negative space taking two-thirds of the space, and

positive space pushed to the left of the painting. *Philosophy* shows the use of both painterly

and linear brushstrokes, creating texture within the forms. Nude figures occupy the left of the

painting, their bodies intertwining and flowing vertically giving a sense of movement to the

piece. A diffused lighting illuminates these figures, which are meant to represent life from the

cradle to the grave, as they stand against a dark background. Klimt uses swirling lines to guide

the viewer vertically through the bodies to show the narrative of the human experience. A

woman looks at the viewer underneath the nude bodies, with her form enveloped in a black

cloak. The face and body of a woman, meant to be Knowledge, comes out of the negative

space, with her form suggested through the use of shadows and highlights. *Philosophy* contains

an illusion of depth and the forms have plasticity. Ludwig Hevesi's description of *Philosophy*

offers information on the colors Klimt used; blue, violet, green, gray, and a golden yellow.[60]

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[58] Frodl, 20.

[59] Colin B. Bailey, "Prolegomena: A Klimt for the Twentieth Century," in *Gustav Klimt: Modernism in the Making,* ed. Lin B. Bailey. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2001). 14-15.

[60] Ludwig Hevesi, *Acht Jahre Secession.* Vienna 1906, pp. 233-234. Translated by Christian Nebehay in *Gustav Klimt: From Drawing to Painting.*

Philosophy marks the beginning of Klimt's development as a mature artist, where he no longer

shows his formal training and instead attempts to symbolize the human condition.

Philosophy was shown in the seventh Secession exhibition in June 1900; it was

celebrated by the art critics Herman Bahrr and Ludwig Hevesi. Karl Krauss criticized the

paintings because he believed that Klimt did not allegorize Philosophy as the "philosophical

minds of the times see her."[61] *Philosophy* was not as vilified as the second painting *Medicine*

(figure 3). The painting was also sent to the Paris World Exposition in 1900 where it was not

well received by critics.[62] *Medicine* is compositionally similar to *Philosophy* with a chain of nude

figures, evoking the human condition from birth until death, swirling into the negative space.

Hygeia, the daughter of medicine, stands in the center of the work holding a snake. She is

decorated with geometric patterns that contrasts her robe. Hygeia stands facing out of the

painting, she looks down to the viewer with a powerful stare. A female floats in the air on the

left of the painting, with her art outstretched to the mass of intertwined bodies on the right.

Her hair billows around her head, blocking her face. She is completely nude, with her body fully

exposed to the viewer and her hips thrust forward. Klimt places a nude pregnant woman in the

mass of bodies on the right of the composition, which instigated the intense public outcry,

especially among the professors and students of the University.[63]

The large number of critics claimed that the University paintings did not harmonize with

their academic and public surroundings, and they were "certainly not for public display in the

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[61] Bailey, 14.

[62] Emily Braun. "Klimtomania/Klimtophobia." In *Gustav Klimt: Modernism in the Making,* ed. Lin B. Bailey. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2001). 45-49.

[63] Peter Vergo. "Between Modernism and Tradition." In *Gustav Klimt: Modernism in the Making*, ed. Lin B. Bailey. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2001). 24-25.

University… the coarseness of conception and lack of aesthetics being deeply offensive to the general public."[64] The explicitly bare figures and the lack of reference to actual medicine and science were the root of the criticism. The suffering of humankind is believed to be a reference to Schopenhauer's view, the World as Will, "as blind energy in an endless round of meaningless parturiency."[65] This may be the result of the influence that salons had on Klimt, where Schopenhauer works were much discussed and admired within the intelligentsia circles.[66]

The last painting for the University of Vienna commission, *Jurisprudence* (figure 4), reflects Klimt's sense of dejection after the public criticism from *Philosophy* and *Medicine.* Klimt flattens the space and forms, showing a clear rejection of his formal training. An emaciated man stands in the center completely naked, his head downcast with his hands clasped behind his back. He is enveloped in the arms of an octopus-like monster. Three female furies surround the male figure, framed by flowing lines and a black mist flowing through the composition. Law, Justice, and Truth stand in the top register of the composition, as they stare down apathetically towards the man who is about to be punished. They stand against a mosaic surface that is ornamented with geometric shapes.

Jurisprudence was denounced for placing jurisprudence in a negative light, rather than celebrating justice and the values of law.[67] Klimt's last University painting, *Jurisprudence,* displays Klimt's sense of victimization and oppression after being criticized and then see as a "political liability."[68] Rather than presenting Jurisprudence as a positive force, she brandishes a

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[64] *Wiener Tageszeitug,* 21 March 1901.
[65] Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna.* 228.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Nebehay, 74.
[68] Ibid, 44.

sword and is about to slay the male victim. Justice, Truth, and Law watch from the top of the

painting's composition, lacking mercy or kindness. Scholars have interpreted this shift in Klimt's

art as a display of Klimt's dismay with the government's treatment of him and feeling as an

outsider.[69] Zuckerkandl says in her book, *Zeitkunst: Wien 1901-1907,* that Klimt said in an

interview, "I have always and everywhere been an embarrassment for the Minister, and by

stepping back as I am now doing I am freeing him from the curious patronage which he had

extended… I refuse all state assistance, I give up everything."[70]   The University gave Klimt back

the paintings in exchange for the 30,000 crowns he received for the commission. August

Lederer bought *Philosophy* from Klimt in 1905, and the two other University paintings were

acquired by Erich Lederer in 1918.[71] This marks the change Klimt's artistic career, he never

accepted a public commission after he gave back the government's payment. Klimt's loyal

patrons, the Lederer family, expressed their support for Klimt despite the hostile reaction from

the public by purchasing the murals; cementing the importance between the artist-patron

relationship that defined the height of Klimt's career.

The Shift from Public to Private Patrons

Klimt broke with the Secession in 1905 because he wanted to find his own independent

style without having to work within a defined group. We see a further abstraction in his pieces,

as well as an expressive use of colors, rather than lines, to construct forms. Klimt renders space

within a single plane, while giving attention to the subject's face and hands bringing her forth

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[69] Ibid.
[70] Berta Zuckerkandl. *Zeitkunst: Wien 1901-1907.* Published 1908. Translated by Nebegay in *Gustav Klimt: From Drawings to Paintings,* 75-76.
[71] Nebehay, 76.
Vergo, 25.

from the canvas. This further abstraction was facilitated by association with and patronage of members from the liberal *bourgeoisie,* most of whom were Jewish. His patrons sought to use their social and economic power to modernize Viennese culture through commissioning art and hosting artists, writers, and members of the intelligentsia circle. Klimt was their painter of choice, visible through the large collections of his paintings that his patrons had, particularly the number of portraits that were privately commissioned in order to express their identity that was rooted in modern culture. They utilized Klimt's painting abilities to represent their newly developed *bourgeoisie* and modern identities, allowing Klimt to work without the restraints of the conservative Viennese public culture.

*Portrait of Eugenia Primavesi (*1914*) (*figure 5) shows the development of Klimt's style. Eugenia's plump and rosy cheeks and calculating gaze stands out against her colorful surroundings. She wears a pastel floral robe, a reference to the *Reformkleid* dresses that were popular amongst the arty circles, while her hands and wrist are adorned with simple but beautiful jewelry.[72] Klimt uses loose brushwork in the background and dress to create more of a suggestion of flowers. Eugenia's head is framed by a green floral arch, contrasting against the canary yellow background. A Chinese print is to Eugenia's left, showing her sophisticated taste in art.

The Primavesi's were ardent supporters of Klimt; they owned 6 paintings by Klimt ranging from landscape, portraits, and Symbolist paintings.[73] Otto Primavesi was a wealthy

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[72] Angela Volker. "Gustav Klimt and Women's Fashion," in *Klimt's Women,* ed. Tobias G. Natter and Gerbert Frodl. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). 48.

[73] Natter, "Princesses Without a History?", in *Klimt's Women,* ed. Tobias G. Natter and Gerbert Frodl. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). 64-65.

banker and Eugenia Primavesi was a Viennese actress and famous for her parties. They were

among Kliimt's few Catholic patrons, and it has been recorded that Eugenia was one of the few

women who intimidated Klimt.[74] They financially backed the Wiener Werkstätte, a production

community of visual arts and sat on the supervisory board giving them leadership roles in

Viennese artistic culture.[75] *Portrait of Eugenia Primavesi* illustrates Klimt's ability to fully

develop as an artist because of his patrons, who sought to represent their avant-garde tastes

through collecting art and hosting salons and parties with artists, authors, and musicians.

The Primavesi's and other patrons of Klimt associated themselves with Gustav Klimt

because they believed his portraits and other paintings could accurately show their

participation in avant-garde culture. Klimt illustrates their wealth and artistic values within his

compositions, both of which were integral factors in their sense of self.

Conclusion

I argue that many Jewish elites' attraction to Gustav Klimt was from by their desire to

cultivate a new identity that was neither traditionally Jewish nor Austrian and that emphasized

the cultivation of a Viennese avant-garde culture. They attached themselves to an Austrian

artist who was also accused of feminizing and weakening Viennese culture. Before Gustav Klimt

and individual families of the Jewish *bourgeoisie* solidified their symbiotic artist-patron

relationship, Klimt was still associated with them and was condemned for turning Viennese art

too "Jewish" by Austrian conservatives. After feeling despondent from his critics Klimt almost

exclusively painted for the (majorly Jewish but occasionally Catholic) *bourgeoisie*. Klimt was

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[74] Tobias G. Natter and Gerbert Frodl, *Klimt's Women.* 128-131.
[75] Ibid.

refused by the public and the Austrian aristocrats because he did not want to paint on the

traditional painting style that they preferred, making him an attractive figure to many form the

bourgeoisie because they also identified themselves in opposition to the Austrian masses and

the noble classes. This artist-patron relationship allowed both parties to develop, artistically

and socially, while at a distance away from public scrutiny.

Chapter 2: Klimt as a Vehicle of Expression for Members of the Jewish Bourgeoisie

Viennese society considered the appreciation and patronage of art as an indicator of social rank.[76] This was compensation for the lack of political influence that the Jewish *bourgeoisie* yielded. They looked to the Vienna Secessionists to serve as a vehicle to illustrate their new identity that was rooted in avant-garde culture, progressive values, and a fluid form of assimilation linking Austrian-ism and Judaism. The Jewish *bourgeoisie* defined itself in contrast to the Austrian aristocracy, just as the Viennese Secessionists defined their artistic identity in contrast to the conservative Royal Academy.[77] Klimt served as an "aid [to] the upper middle class [for their] desperate attempt to lend a sense of elitist style to an emerging democratic society."[78] Although the upper middle-class saw themselves in opposition to the ruling class, they wanted to commission art to commemorate and immortalize themselves, mimicking the aristocrats but with a modernist style.[79] Klimt was able to develop and modernize his artistic style and identity as he became totally reliant on the private commissions, most from the Jewish bourgeoisie, because they strived to have a Modern artistic identity after they both were shut out of participation in mainstream society, resulting in a symbiotic artist-patron relationship.

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[76] Heller, 113.
[77] Meyer, 3-4
Lloyd. 21.
[78] Heller, 111.
[79] Kallir. 61.

The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Bourgeoisie's Political Power

      The rapid rise and decline of liberal *nouveau riche* political participation led "such disappointment on the party of Vienna's bourgeoisie that it retreated from the political scene and sought refuge in the aesthetic sphere."[80] This prejudice against the Jewry limited their ability to fully assimilate into the mainstream culture, as, in Milton Gordon's view, assimilation relies on the tolerance towards the ethnic group by the majority and the eventual intermarriage between the two.[81] Many Jewish people felt compelled to relax their religious practices while strengthening their Jewish cultural identity in order to assimilate, forming "new patterns of Jewish behavior which different from traditional ones but were nonetheless distinctively Jewish."[82]

      The reaction to the intense nationalist and anti-Semitic milieu led many of them to look inward and influence art and culture in Vienna. The increased wealth allowed this new social class to commission art, and their attention was drawn to the Secessionists, the alternative group of artists that rejected the conservative and traditional painting norms of the Vienna Royal Academy.[83] Art transitioned from a publicly controlled expression defined and supported by the Royal Academy and majority, and turned into a private and personal expression for the

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[80] Ibid.
[81] Rozenblit, 3.
[82] Ibid, 7.
[83] Gronberg 73.

disenfranchised but affluent Jewish bourgeoisie.[84] Jews became "both the producers and

consumers of culture," participating a disproportionate amount to their population size.[85]

The Change in Portraiture in Nineteenth Century Vienna

Hans Makart, Klimt's predecessor, was Vienna's foremost painter in the mid-nineteenth

century.[86] Makart studied at the Akademie in Munich from 1860 to 1865. Four years into his

career, Emperor Francis Joseph invited Makart to Vienna to decorate the Ringstrasse, which

was undergoing construction.[87] He produced decorative murals for various palaces and homes

that were part of the RIngstrasse, such as decorative murals in the Palais Hoyos. He quickly

became a popular portrait painter among the Viennese elite, including the aristocracy. *Portrait

of Crown Princess Stephanie* (figure 6) is a large portrait of the Crown Princess of Austria,

Princess Stephanie. Makart was commissioned during the peak of his career, and we see the

traditional Historicist style that Makart's works were grounded in. Princess Stephanie stands in

the middle ground of the composition, her pale complexion is emphasized by her very pale

gown that cascades down the platform and onto the black and white tiled floor. Princess

Stephanie rests her gloved hand on a table draped in lush red fabric next to a bouquet of roses.

She is positioned in front of a red curtain and a classical style column. Princess Stephanie's

flowers and ruffles on her gown are mimicked by the bouquet of flowers on her left and the

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[84] Reinhold Heller. "Recent Scholarship on Vienna's 'Golden Age," Gustav Klimt, and Egon Schiele." *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 59, no. 1, 1977, pp. 111–118. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3049602. 114.

[85] Rozenblit 1.

[86] "Hans Makart." *The Aldine* 9, no. 9 (1879): 282. http.www.jstor.org/stable/20637628.

[87] Gebert Frodl. "Makart, Hans." *Grove Art Online.* 7 Apr. 2018. http.www.ocfordonline.comgroveart/view/10//1093/gao/9781884446054.001/oao-9781884446054-e-7000053322.

blossoming branch that peeks out of in the background. Makart's portrait of the Crown

Princess is both stylistically and physically based within the aristocratic portrait tradition, visible

in her pose, her surroundings and the illusion of depth within the space. Her noble social status

and wealth are clearly expressed within this piece. Princess Stephanie is not grounded within

the piece, with her face cast under a shadow while her body is highlighted with use of light.

She looks disengaged within the piece as she stars aloofly out of the composition with her eyes

downcast. The *Portrait of Crown Princess Stephanie* shows the aesthetic values of the

aristocratic elite and the artistic legacy that Klimt and his patrons were moving away from while

developing their own artistic identities.

Klimt's modernization can be seen in tandem with his increased reliance and connection

to the middle class and the self-imposed distance from the "rationalist academic" Royal

Academy of Fine Art.[88] Many *nouveau riche* individuals and families used portraiture as a way

to express their newfound wealth and social and economic power, similar to the aristocratic

tradition though stylistically different. Klimt's portraits are a physical manifestation of

selbstdarstellung -- the public and theatricalized presentation of oneself. His portraits were

used as a vehicle for the Jewish bourgeoisie to construct and project their identities as

assimilated Jews who valued modernity and culture.[89] They expressed this new sense of self by

patronizing Klimt and other Secessionists because of their anti-traditional artistic philosophy

and style. The individuals from the Jewish *bourgeoisie* served important roles in shaping avant-

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[88] Tobias G. Natter, "Klimt and Szerena Lederer: Identity and Contradictory Realities of Great Art," in *Klimt and the Women of Vienna's Golden Age* (Munich: Prestel, 2016). 37.
[89] Gronberg 71.

garde Viennese culture through their conspicuous spending and their drive to define

themselves as neither traditionally Jewish nor Austrian.

Representations of Material Culture and Modern Values in Portraits

His patrons' taste for ostentatious portraits created a codependent reliance between

patron and artist. The wealth of his patrons is presented through luxurious garments, beautiful

jewelry, and the sheer size of the paintings. *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I* (figure 7) illustrates

Bloch-Bauer's wealth and prestige. Adele Bloch-Bauer was a wealthy society woman and a

renowned *salonniére.* She was born into a wealthy Jewish family; her father was a director of

the Viennese Bank association and president of the Orient railway company.[90] Adele was

married at 18 to Ferdinand Bloch, an industrialist. Her salon hosted guests such as Gustav

Mahler, Richard Strauss, Stef Zweig, and Secessionist artists.

Klimt, during the peak of his gold phase, used gold and silver throughout the

composition to create a mosaic-effect, blending her gown and the background together. Her

exposed face, chest, and hands are strikingly pale with strong undertones of blue and greens,

and a small portion of the ground is painted an emerald green. The painting rests on a single

picture plane because of the use of metals rather than pigments, leaving the composition

nearly devoid of contours and depth, with the exception of Adele's face and hands. Bloch-Bauer

stands slightly right of center in the foreground of the painting. She looks directly at the viewer

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[90] Eleana Shapira. "Adele Bloch-Bauer." *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia.* 1 March 2009. Jewish Women's Archive. Accessed March 22, 2018. *<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/bloch-bauer-adele>.*
Tobias G. Natter, "Gustav Klimt: Female Portraits," in *Klimt's Women,* ed. Tobias G. Natter and Gerbert Frodl. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). 115-118.

with her hands clasped. Her pale complexion is given a blue undertone, contrasting her dark

hair and eyes and hints of pink in "her lips and checks. Bloch-Bauer wears a gown that gets

absorbed into the background, while the viewer's gaze is directed to her contoured hands,

head, and chest. Her gown is decorated with various geometric motifs; the evil eyes in the

center of her gown lead the viewer up to her face, accompanied by flanking bisected circles and

squares that appear to dissolve into the background, her chest is covered with triangles and

squares. Klimt creates movement within the composition through the swirling whorls and fluid

lines. Bloch-Bauer is framed by more circular and square patterns, highlighting her face. Adele

wears ostentatious jewelry; Klimt places great detail in her choker and bracelets to emphasize

the diamonds, rubies, and emeralds set in gold and platinum. The use of silver and gold in the

rest of the painting underscores the jewels' preciousness and her wealth. Adele is presented

almost as a Byzantine religious icon through the mosaics and gold-leaf, while displaying her

money very publicly.[91]

Klimt's portraits show the material culture among the Viennese elite, displaying their

sophistication and wealth within a modern context. Klimt's *Portrait of Baroness Elisabeth*

Bachofen-Echt (figure 8) illustrates the Jewish bourgeoisie identity differently from the *Portrait*

of Adele Bloch-Bauer. Elisabeth stands on a brightly colored Middle Eastern rug with her body

against a jade blue background with *chinoiserie* figurines on the wall.[92] She is surrounded by a

mandorla-like mass, adorned with stylized Asian symbols. The use of Oriental motifs shows her

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[91] This painting was presented in a Secessionist show in 1907

[92] Susanne Kelley. "Perceptions of Jewish female bodies through Gustav Klimt and Peter Altenberg." maginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies/revue d'études interculturelle de l'image 3, no. 1 (2012). https://resolver.1science.com/proquest/?id=2efc0bf03fbe9a9c7459800082e7b15bc16dd294.

exotic "otherness" from typical (Christian) Austrian women. Imports from the Far East were

very influential in the development of Modernism, as Impressionist artists mimicked the hard

outlines, the flattened space, and the intricate decorative patterns. Klimt is both referring to

the important impact that Asian art had on Modern art, while also presenting Elisabeth's non-

Austrian identity and the wealth needed to afford such objects.   Klimt created the artistic

rendering of his patrons' identities, while being able to break free from the historical painting

tradition because of their patronage.[93]

Conclusion

The Viennese Jewry used Gustav Klimt as a vehicle to artistically express their new

identity rooted in both Jewish and Austrian identity through commissioning Klimt to produce

their portraits, rather than other Viennese painters. Well-known *fin-de-siècle* Viennese portrait

painters include Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka, but they were not popular amongst elite

Jewish families. Egon was an Austrian Expressionist artist who debuted in the art scene in

1909.[94] Schiele mentored under Klimt, first emulating Klimt's style before developing his own.

Although initially brought into Vienna's circle of artists and intelligentsia, Schiele's paintings

were seen as too abrasive or too sexually explicit; characteristics that were not considered

attractive assets for a portrait painter. Schiele became more popular for his erotic paintings and

drawings, overshadowing his portraits. Oskar Kokoschka was in the same artistic generation as

Schiele and a fellow Expressionist painter.[95] The popularity of Klimt as a painter among many

assimilated Jewish families shows that Klimt was one of the few artists who could accurately

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Kallir, 63-64
[95] Ibid, 66.

and appropriately express their identity, creating a special and unique artist-patron

relationship. Klimt and the Jewish *bourgeoisie* were shuttered out of participation in Austrian

society, creating a bond that was centered in the modern values and aesthetics that were

rejected by the Austrian masses and conservative leaders.

Chapter 3: Women in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*

It is known that Klimt is celebrated as the painter of beautiful women, but it is also important to know that he declared that women are the key to the modernity in his art.[96] When viewing the totality of his works, one cannot discuss Klimt's art without discussing his representations of women. Nineteenth-century Vienna experienced social change in the form of revolutions, population growth, and political structures that created an environment in which modern culture could develop in. I argue that Klimt's representations of women, whether nude or fully clothed, rich or poor, were the result of the impact of his female intellectual peers and patrons, rather than only a male-fantasy of women. Women's involvement in Viennese avant-garde culture and society can be seen in Klimt's paintings, as Klimt presents their identity to the world by inserting women in previously male-dominated and non-domestic spaces and by activating the female nude and female sexuality by expression a sense of emotions and desires rather than vacancy and passivity.[97] The choice of many women to sit for portraits for Klimt shows that they believed Klimt could accurately display their modern and feminist womanhood.

Role of Salons

An important way the Secessionists were brought into the inner-fold of the Jewish middle class was through the salons hosted by *nouveau riche* Jewish women. The introduction of salons in Viennese society created an avenue through which middle-class women could become leaders and participants within intellectual and artistic circles. Germaine de Stael, a

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[96] Lloyd, 27.
[97] Gronberg.

Parisian writer, a political propagandist, and conversationalist, noted on her visit to Vienna in the early nineteenth century that the Austrian aristocrats did not have an interest in supporting the arts or literature. Wealthy Jewish women, rather than men, led the development of aesthetic and intellectual culture in Vienna during the nineteenth century despite the societal constraint on women.[98] The rise of the salons was an important shift in traditional gender roles that challenged the strict dichotomy between public versus private spheres and masculine versus feminine spheres.

Salons were imported to Vienna from Berlin by Fanny von Arnstein in the eighteenth century, and lasted in Vienna until World War II.[99] Fanny von Arnstein (1758-1818) was the daughter of King Frederick II of Prussia's Master of the Mint and the head of Berlin's Jewish community; she was raised surrounded by Prussia's intellectual elites and received a good education.[100] After marrying a Viennese Jewish banker, she moved to Vienna and established her salon because there was not a space for women to engage in political and social conversations. Her salon attracted many Liberal members of the Vienna Congress and was the first venue in which women could engage in political and social discourse.

Viennese salons in the late eighteenth century became centers of literary and artistic discussions. Berta Zuckerkandl was a writer, art critic, Jewish and women's rights advocate, and a *salonnière.* She was born into a literary family; her father, Moritz Szeps, was a journalist and publisher of *Neues Wiener Tagblatt,* a liberal newspaper in Vienna. Zuckerkandl married a

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[98] Spiel, 41.

[99] Alison Rose, "The Jewish Salons of Vienna," in *Gender and Modernity in Central Europe: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its Legacy,* ed. Alison Rose. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010). 119. *http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ckpfdx.*

[100] Spiel, 41.

Hungarian anatomist, Emil Zuckerkandl widening her audience beyond the artistic crowd to

scientists at her salon, along with the artists, musicians, and writer. Zuckerkandl was dubbed

"the puppeteer of the Viennese cultural scene," hosting figures such as Josef Hoffman, Otto

Wagner, Gustav Mahler, and Gustav Klimt. Zuckerkandl said herself, "the divan, which has seen

so many things, listens to the politicians with understanding: it knows many poets who sounded

their laments on it… On my divan Austria comes alive."[101] Zuckerkandl's intentionality and

awareness of her importance in developing a distinct modern Austrian culture, and she used

this influence for progression. Klimt never portrayed Zuckerkandl, possibly because her and her

husband could not afford it, but she celebrated Klimt and his ability to represent women in his

works.[102] Her salon is cited as the birthplace of the Vienna Secession and an influential force in

its popularity.[103] The Jewish salon became a focus for criticism, showing the threat it posed to

the conservative Viennese atmosphere.[104]

Patronage and financial support was another way that women could engage in the

artistic arena. The appreciation and patronage of art was considered a representation of social

rank among the bourgeoisie as well as a way to modernize Viennese culture.[105] Klimt's

portraits were popular amongst the *nouveau riche* who frequented Zuckerkandl's and other

women's salons, because they were able to commemorate and immortalize themselves

through a Modernist lens and represent their social and artistic break from aristocrats and their

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[101] Rose 127.
[102] Emily Braun. "Ornament as Evolution," in *Gustav Klimt: The Ronald S. Lauder and Serge Sabarsky Collection,* ed. Renèe Price. (Munich: Prestel, 2008). 158.
[103] Rose, 127.
[104] Ibid 132.
[105] Heller, 113.

historic portraits.[106] This was important to the role they designated themselves as influencers in

Viennese avant-garde culture and in social and artistic opposition to the conservative

aristocrats.

Pushing the Boundaries of Masculine Interiority

Klimt's portraits reflect the importance of interior spaces as a central component for

shaping Austrian modern culture. Klimt is often criticized for placing women in constrained

interior spaces, but I argue that interiority was a positive expression of his patrons' identity as

forces behind cultural progress. Cafés and salons were important centers for artists and the

literati to communicate and share their ideas, their presence "a means of recollecting the city's

fin-de-siècle artistic culture."[107] Many scholars reinforce the importance that interiors served in

the development of *fin-de-siècle* culture, and they shifted to become male dominated spaces as

a refuge from the antagonistic public atmosphere.[108] Gronberg states that interiority and

masculinity were then linked because role of cafés and salons blurred the spatial dichotomy

between work and public life and private life, while providing a space in which modern artistic

and intellectual discourse could thrive in.[109] Therefore, the encasement of women inside closed

spaces is an intentional demonstration of the sitter's influence in culture.

In *Portrait of Margarethe Stonborough-Wittgenstein* (figure 9), Klimt places Margarethe

Stonborough-Wittgenstein in an interior space. Stonborough-Wittgenstein stands as the center

and sole figure in the composition, her form mimicking the verticality of the painting itself. Her

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[106] Kallir, 61.
[107] Gronberg, 70.
Spiel, 56.
[108] Gronberg, 74.
[109] Ibid, 86.

chest is exposed by the off-the-shoulder gown she dons, which was considered a sexual style in

the 1900s, while the rest of her body is covered. She bisects the negative spaces, creating a

symmetrical organization of space. The background is partitioned into geometric spaces,

differentiated by colors and ornamental details such as the black checkered baseboard, creating

a mosaic effect. Klimt used a cool color palette with white, lavender and violet as the

predominant hues, which pushes Stonborough-Wittgenstein's head, décolletage, and hands to

the forefront of the painting. We see broad, painterly brushstrokes used in the background,

while Klimt places attention and detail to her facial features and hands, as well as defining the

texture of the folds and lace of her gown. Klimt did not use highlights or shadows to create

plasticity or depth within the composition, putting the forms onto a single picture plan. The

space behind her head h is meant to represent the popular art nouveau interior designs by

Josef Hoffman, the leading Vienna Secessionist interior designer and architect, according to

Christian Nebehay, a preeminent scholar on Klimt.[110]

Margarethe Stonborough-Wittgenstein came from a prominent Jewish Viennese family

(they later converted to Catholicism), whose legacy in Vienna started with her father Karl

Wittgenstein, the immensely wealthy industrial magnate, the honorary president of the

Secession, and a leading collector of art.[111] Margarethe held an influential role in the Vienna art

scene in her own right; she was the president of the Vienna Arts and Crafts Society, a

salonnière, studied chemistry and mathematics, and a psychoanalysis advisor. Margarethe's

academic and intellectual participation in traditionally male-dominated fields of study, as well

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[110] Christian M. Nebehay, *Gustav Klimt: From Drawing to Painting.* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.,1992), 206.
[111] Ibid, 206-211.

as being painted within an interior space shows can provide evidence for relation of interiority,

masculinity, and intellect.

Mada Primavesi (figure 10) exemplifies the different presentation of women and

children in his works.[112] Mada Primavesi was the daughter of Otto and Eugenia Primavesi, who

were ardent patrons of the arts as well as close friends with Klimt. Mada looks directly at the

viewer as she stands defiantly with her legs rooted far apart in the ground. The background is

separated into two spaces: the upper portion painted with a bright purples and blues with

flowers enthroning her torso and head, and the lower section with waterlilies, fish, and birds

surrounding her legs. There is an overt flora motive integrated throughout the painting. Klimt

places Mada in a "spring-like" spaces with bright, springtime colors and flowers falling in the air.

Her white lawn dress is decorated with more flowers, pushing her into the decorative elements

of the painting. The floral overtones place her within a natural setting, as he blurs the

boundaries between the interior and exterior. Klimt separates the spheres occupied by grown

women and young children, at a time when women generally were treated not too differently

from children; they were not given political or social rights, and viewed instead "fragile,

helpless object[s]."[113] Klimt illustrates his sitter's agency by placing her within an interior space

devoid of notions of domesticity, which were formerly reserved for men, indicating their

intellect and breaking down gender norms.

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[112]Katharine Baetjer. "About Mäda." *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 40 (2005): 131-47. doi:10.1086/met.40.20320649.

[113] Jan Thompson, "The Role of Woman in the Iconography of Art Nouveau," *Art Journal* 31, no. 2 (1971):, accessed July 21, 2017, doi:10.2307/775570.

Carl Schorske wrote that "notions of interiority are crucial for an understanding of

Viennese modernity."[114] Interiority was a manifestation of Viennese urban modernity, as cafes

and salons offered a stage for artists and intellectuals despite the rampant chauvinism that

permeated Austrian public life.[115] The assignment of the interior as a male space was created

by Alberti in the fifteenth century, who wrote that the home is a "masculine fabrication and

public spectacle."[116] Alberti was not referring to the domesticity of the home as a male-

controlled space but instead to the creation of personal and familial image seen by the public.

The home has traditionally been a space that was socially and economically controlled by the

husband and expected to be idly occupied by the wife as she raises his children.[117] Klimt sheds

his sitters from the domestic expectations and asserts their independence as she is actively

engaged in the portrait and in real life. Klimt brings the female form out of the flat, inanimate

space by contouring her face and hands. By placing women within a non-domestic interior

space, Klimt is elevating Jewish women as participants in typically masculine, intellectual life,

while also letting these bourgeois women to retain their femininity by surrounding them with

highly-ornamental and materialistic decorations.[118]

Empowerment and Agency

Klimt represents women in the way that many modern women wanted to be presented;

Klimt activates the sitter by no longer forcing women to be objects. Klimt has been both

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[114] Ibid.
[115] Gronberg 73.
[116] Ibid, 77.
[117] Monka Pessler and Thomas Trummer. "Portraits and Pose. On the representation Image of the "Feminine" at the Fin de siècle." in *Klimt's Women*, ed. Tobias G. Natter and Gerbert Frodl. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 150.
[118] Kelley.

condemned and celebrated for his illustrations of female sexuality and nudity, with both sides

claiming that Klimt is expressing his view and treatment of women through both his privately

commissioned and personal works. The leaders of the General Austrian Women's Association,

Marie Lang and Rosa Mayreder, were supporters of Klimt because he explored and depicted

female sexuality, form, and emancipation in his works. Zuckerkandl repeatedly chose to defend

Klimt against the criticism he faced in his representations of the nude female body, especially

the nude pregnant women in numerous paintings, stating "it is a glorification of motherhood, of

her unconscious heroism, shown with the most honorable and artistic mastery".[119] Numerous

feminist leaders viewed Klimt as an agent to accurately represent women despite the

oppressive public sentiment in Vienna, allowing him to publicly assert their identities as strong

women during "an era in which women were kept as virtual pets… made to feel helpless and

therefore desirable."[120] Other Art Nouveau artists, such as Alphonse Mucha and Aubrey

Beardsley, frequently used women as the subject matter, but they were idealized and used as

decoration or objects. Genre paintings and advertisements turned the female form into an

extension of the furnishings or the advertised goods by removing any illusion of emotions or

intellect in her facial expression.[121]

     Women's push against traditional gender boundaries to instigate social change within

an "anti-Modern" society gave conservatives ammunition to blame progressive women for the

decline of the Empire. Otto Weininger wrote *Sex and Character* (1903) in order to address the

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[119] Berta Zuckerkandl, "Kunst and Kultur: *Die Hoffnung." Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung,* April 26, 2909. Trans. Emily Braun in "Ornament as Evolution."
[120] Thompson, 158.
[121] Ibid, 159.

feminization (and therefore the degradation) of Viennese culture.[122] He stated that women, who could only either be prostitutes or mothers according to him, lacked souls and were controlled by their sexual organs.[123] He also claimed that women were the passive and unconscious gender, while men were active and had agency in their lives and society. Weininger claimed the broader notion that men are leaders of and contributors to society and culture, while women are secondary actors within their own lives. Women involved in the Liberation Movement sought to undermine such widespread beliefs by promoting social equality and participation, while trying to assert their intellect and agency within society.[124] I posit that the praise from many individuals from the Women's Liberation Movement, many of whom were from *bourgeoisie* families, shows they believed that Klimt could accurately represent them without objectifying or pacifying them in portraits.

Judith I (figure 11) represents the empowerment and vitality that Klimt brought into his paintings of women, a reflection of the influence that the salons and their feminist hosts asserted. Although not confirmed, it has been claimed by scholars that Adele Bloch-Bauer was the model for this painting because of the similarities between Judith and Adele's visage.[125] Judith's nudity, paired with her intense authoritative gaze, is no longer a traditional nude because she is the dominant participant in the viewer-sitter relationship. Franz. A. J. Szabo described this painting as, "[a symbol of] triumph of the erotic feminine principle over the

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[122] Jacques Le Rider. "Between Modernism and Post Modernism, the Viennese Identity Crisis," trans. Ralph Manehim. In *Vienna 1900: From Altenberg to Wittengstein,* edited by Edward Timms and Ritchie Robertson. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 5.
Otto Weininger. *Sex & Character. New York : AMS Press, 1975.*
[123] Kallir, 60.
[124] Braun. "Ornament as Evolution. 149.
[125] Susanna Partsch. *Gustav Klimt: Painter of Women*. (Munich: Prestel, 2012). 78.

aggressive masculine one."[126] This is a representation of the "Story of Judith and Holofernes" from the deuterocanonical book of Judith. Judith, which means Jewish woman, is a beautiful and chaste Jewish widow who takes her and her people's fates into her own hands by deciding to defeat the Assyrian army on her own. The Assyrian army, led by General Holofernes, was sent by the King of Nineveh to defeat and control the Jewish people in Bethulia. The Jewish people were close to starvation and defeat, but Judith secretly goes into the Assyrian camp at night to defeat Holofernes. Judith got Holofernes drunk and charmed him with her wits and beauty, and when his guard was down she decapitated him. Judith brings his severed head back to her people, who then gain the confidence to fight and defeat the Assyrian Army.

Judith I lies on a flattened plane, with the female figure, identified as Judith in the top register of the frame in a faux-relief, pushed to the foreground of the piece. The female figure's left forearm bisects the composition and draws the viewer's gaze to a severed head. She holds a decapitated male head, identified as Holofernes, in the bottom right corner, pushed partially out of the frame. The figure's dark features, including her eyes, eyebrows, and hair, contrast against her pale and rosy skin. The female stares down at the viewer, implying a position above the audience, with a strong proud expression, which is reinforced by her bold coloring. She wears a gilded gold and silk diaphanous robe and large gold choker, articles of clothes that were popular amongst society women, while her décolletage and stomach remain exposed to the artist and viewer. The background consists of highly stylized trees and other "greenery" made of gold leaf contrasted against a black background. A blue-green colored space flanks Judith's

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[126] Eric Galowitsch. "The 'Fatal Woman' in Feminism and Modernism." *EThesis*. Ethesis.org/the-fatal-woman-in-feminism-and-modernism-eric-galowitsch.

bottom half in the bottom left quadrant. The severed male head is tenderly but possessively clutched by the female. Klimt used very dark, muted colors for the male head, which, along with its small size and only partial presence, almost hides the head from the viewer. Framing the painting is a gold frame that reads "Judith and Holofernes". Klimt used a combination of soft and defined lines, creating a juxtaposition within the painting. The light is diffused across the female figure, while the gold leaf has a powerful sheen, illuminating the female figure through their complementary differences. The composition rests on a vertical linear plane, which is emphasized by the upward thrusting trees and other background details, as well as her tall choker, long physical features, and the male head held up by the female. Klimt used a combination of contrasting painting techniques to create a strong, and highly present painting.

The female nude is a prevalent subject within the Western art historical canon. Typically, the female sitter reclines in the center of the composition while the point of view is from above her, placing her below the viewer. This treatment of the female nude forces her body into passivity and availability for the male gaze. Judith's nudity, when paired with her intense authoritative gaze, is no longer a traditional nude because she is the dominant participant in the viewer-subject relationship. When looking at traditional nude paintings, one can see the role that the male-gaze had on the representation of the female body and sexuality. Instead, Klimt gives Judith agency both in her fate and her sexuality, empowering her and showing women as strong individuals, rather than the defenseless and fragile objects.

Nourma Broude and Mary Garrard believe the problematic treatment of "the female body [is] to satisfy exclusively male needs, and of the crude reflection in such art of the power between

the sexes."[127] Klimt depicts the heroine in the moments following the decapitation of Holofernes, the empowering moment in the story. Judith is given agency and is in control of the situation, and Klimt is expressing this control she has by painting her after she has killed Holofernes. The act of decapitating Holofernes would not have occurred without Judith's determination to save her people, so it is relevant Klimt is emphasizing her and not the actual act of killing. This furthers Judith's strength, which was needed to protect the Jewish people from the Assyrians. Klimt is choosing to display her strength and the success of her plan, making her a successful political leader. The scholar Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat asserts that Klimt's use of gold to encase Judith turns the painting into an "almost sacred icon of womanhood," positioning her as a empowered female figure, just has his female peers were empowered females who pushed professional and cultural boundaries.

Klimt designed the painting's frame and inscribed *"Judith und Holofernes"* on it.[128] Despite this inscription, some people identified Judith as Salome, giving Judith a vastly different narrative and casting her as an evil, rather than heroic, woman. Judith and Salome's incentives for killing the men differ completely, as Judith was chosen by God to save her people while Salome had St. John the Baptist killed by her father, King Herod, because he rebuffed her advances. Changing the subject's identity reflects the misogynistic and anti-Semitic society that loomed over Vienna, as this strong woman was no longer Jewish nor a protector of her people as she became evil and malicious.

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[127] Mary Garrard and Nourma Broude, "Feminist Art History and the Academy: Where Are We Now?" *Women's Studies Quarterly,* vol. 15, no. ½: Teaching about Women and the Visual Arts, Spring – Summer 1987. 11. Accessed November 20, 2017. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40004833.
[128] Fliedl, 140.

Judith I is an empowering image of a Jewish woman, as Klimt presents her as a *femme forte* as she returns the gaze to the viewer and displays her strength. This was produced amidst a time of public scrutiny and prejudice against women and Jews. The anxiety towards the liberation of women is expressed by some viewers turning Judith into Salome, giving into Weininger's argument that women are amoral beings controlled by their unrestrained sexual urges. Klimt's female peers wanted to be leaders and influencers in society, which presented a threat to the chauvinist society, just as Klimt is presenting Judith as a leader of her people. Felix Salten, a contemporaneous writer and critic, celebrates Klimt, *"*[because] he takes a figure from the present, a living person… and shifts the figure into the magical shade of distant centuries… [in] a modern style."[129] Klimt's peers were aware of and celebrated the modernization of this ancient story by Klimt empowering Judith with her captivating gaze, bare chest, and possessive grasp of Holofernes's head. Judith is brought into the twentieth century with her contemporary jewelry and robe, transforming into a Feminist icon for emancipated women.

Conclusion

Klimt represents the female form with empowering imagery, displaying women's identity within their own terms rather than a male contrived one. The *saloniéres*, feminists, art collectors, and intellectuals found solidarity with Gustav Klimt and his images of women, celebrating them to be real representations of women rather than the image of a woman through a male eye. Klimt shows the influence that Jewish women asserted during *fin-de-siècle* Vienna despite the rampant

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[129] Felix Salten, "Eine schöne jüdische Jourdame / Was will er den eigentlich?" Salen, *Gustav Klimt. Gelegentliche Anmerkungen,* Vienna and Leipzig 1903. Quoted from Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat, "Judith," in *Klimt's Women,* edited by Tobias Natter and Gerbert Frodl. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). Print. 221.

anti-Semitism and misogyny that permeated through public life. Women wanted to emancipate themselves from the confining gender norms that were defined during the Industrial Revolution, to become contributors and leaders within Viennese society and culture. Many men pushed against feminism because women's emancipation coincided with the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and economic and social instability, leading them to link women's liberation with the destruction of their society. Klimt's representations of women oppose the widely accepted beliefs about females, recorded in Otto Weininger's popular book, *Sex and Character,* that described women as passive amoral beings who lack agency in their lives, and therefore needed to be controlled by men. Klimt was chosen to paint many feminist figures, while also being promoted by other empowered women. Klimt illustrates women's positions in the growth of modern Viennese culture by placing them in non-domestic interior spaces, a sphere that traditionally was controlled by men. Klimt also empowers women through portraying the female form and sexuality within empowering terms. His nude women express desire, pleasure, and dominance rather than the typical passive object for the male viewer to consume. He turns Judith, an Old Testament heroine, into a liberated 20th century woman; possibly an ode to the strong and independent women who surrounded him.

Conclusion

As the Jewish *bourgeoisie* faced their political downfall and increased hostility from the greater Viennese public, many sought to use their economic power and intellectualism to control Viennese avant-garde culture.[130] Many looked to fiscally and intellectually support the Vienna Secession through commissioning works and bringing many artists into their inner circles of other individuals from Vienna's intelligentsia. Gustav Klimt became the most popular painter among many patrons from Vienna's industrialists and intellectual communities. This allowed him to become independent from commissions from the Viennese government that resulted in public condemnation of Klimt as an artist and as an Austrian man by claiming he was feminizing and corrupting Austro-German culture and society. Klimt and his patrons were able to express their artistic identities through each other; his patrons giving him full authority over the subject and style of his works, while Klimt expressed his client's identities through the modern and abstracted portraits.

The important role that many wealthy (and often Jewish) families can be seen in the development of Klimt's painting style, which moved from the traditional Historicist style of Vienna's Academy of Fine Art to the abstracted and modern compositions that he continues to be known for. This transition is marked by important events in Klimt's artistic career; his Burgtheater murals from the 1880s, the formation of the Vienna Secession in 1897, his University Paintings between 1895 and 1905, and then his exit from the Secession and total reliance on private commissions in 1905. The more dependent on private commissions from

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[130] Parsons, 219.

individuals and families from the Jewish *bourgeoisie,* the more modern his works become. We see the continuation of the flattening of space and form through the decreased use of shadows and highlight and the increased use of colors to create form. I argue that his private patrons wanted Klimt's paintings to continue to modernize in order to reflect their leading roles in Viennese artistic culture, which was essential to their identity.

Klimt shows their wealth and cultural values through his portraits of women from the Jewish elite families. His inclusion of gold leaf, jewelry, the in vogue East Asian art, and other objects of wealth show their exquisite tastes and the importance his patrons put into material culture. Klimt also empowers women in his pieces by activating their role within the composition such as *Judith I,* in which Judith engages the viewer through direct contact and boldly asserts her power as a Jewish woman.

Interior spaces served important roles in the development of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna because many intellectuals, whether Jewish or simply too modern for the Austrian masses, had to move into the private realm to disseminate their ideas. Scholars such as Tag Gronberg and Mark Wigley state that the interior was a male-centric space because of its important role in literary and artistic culture. By placing his sitters within non-domestic interior spaces, Klimt is expressing the role that many middle class Jewish women served in modernizing Vienna, whether through hosting salons, participating in the Jewish and women liberation movements, and professional careers. Culture is no longer a male-dominated world because of the efforts of many of Klimt's female peers to pioneer women's rights.

The large number of Jewish *bourgeoisie* patrons who financially supported and socially and intellectually associated with Klimt did so because they wanted to be leaders of modern

culture. The importance of material and intellectual culture that they placed onto their self-

identity is visible through their support of Klimt to continue to abstract and modernize his art.

Appendix: Images

Figure 1. Gustav Klimt, *Shakespeares Theater,* 1886, oil on canvas, Burgtheater, Vienna

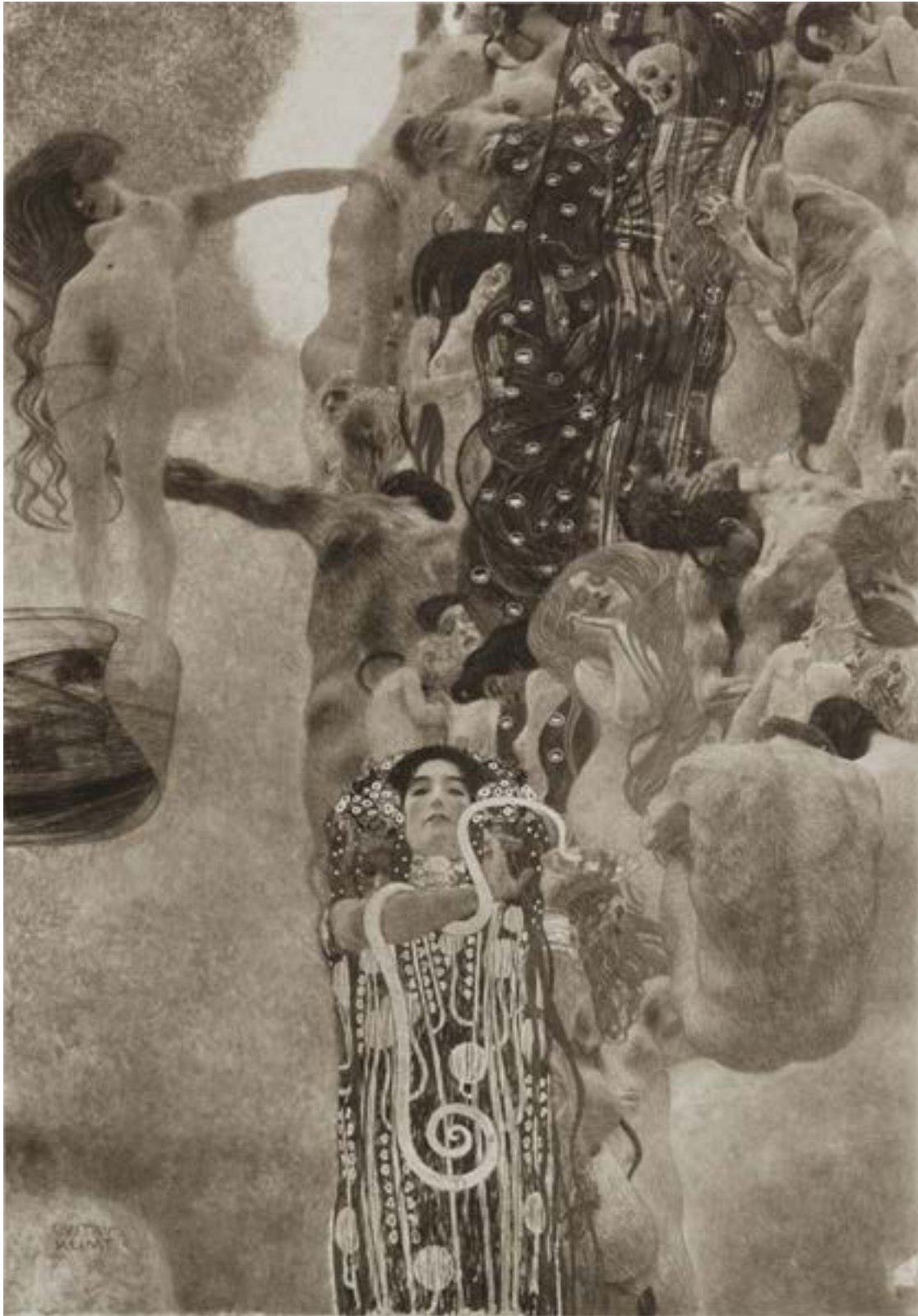Figure 2. Gustav Klimt, *Philosophy,* 1899, Oil on Canvas, destroyed by German forces in 1945

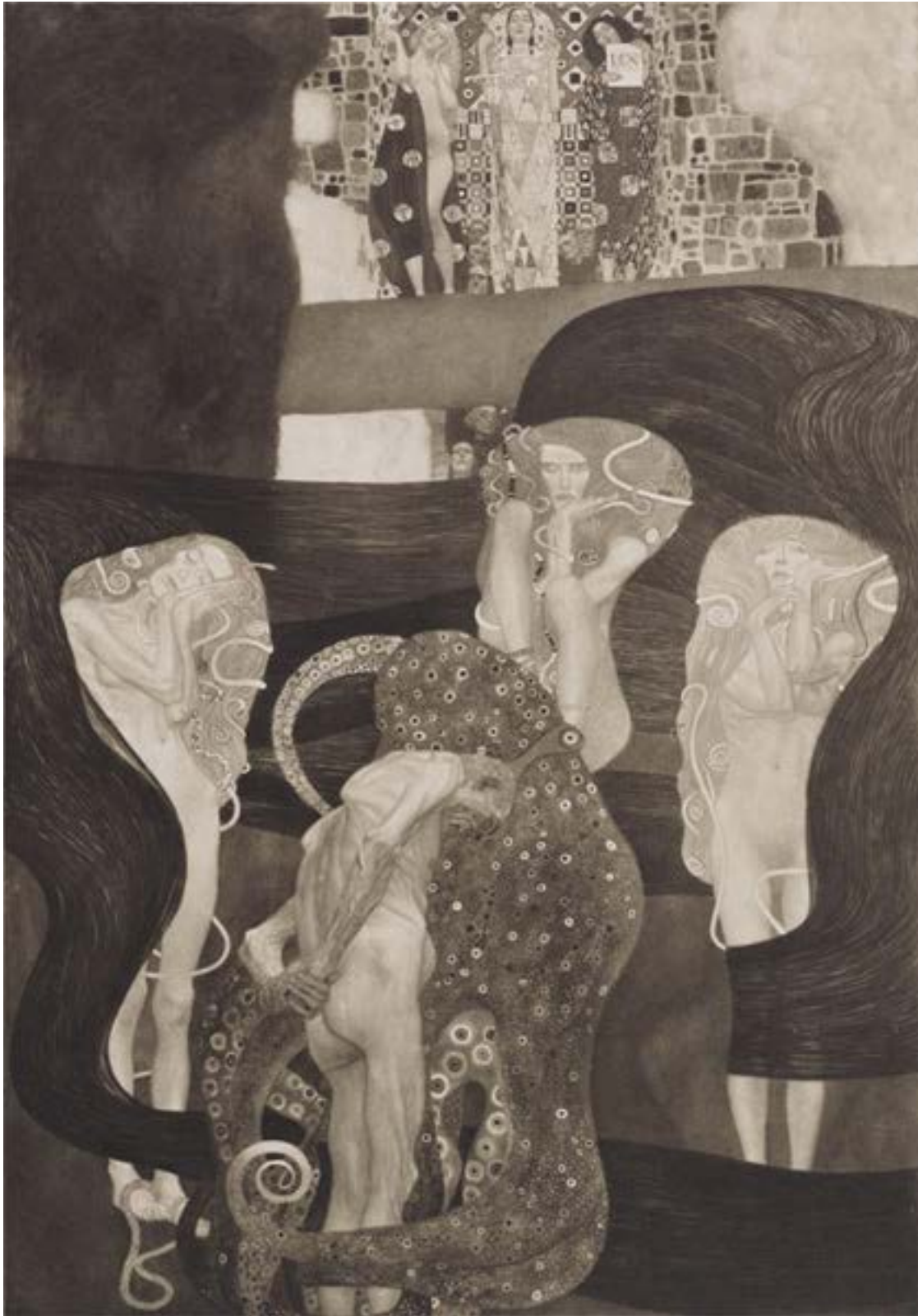Figure3. Gustav Klimt, *Medicine,* 1901, Oil on Canvas, destroyed by German forces in 1945

Figure 4. Gustav Klimt, *Jurisprudence,* 1903, Oil on canvas, destroyed by German forces in 1945

s
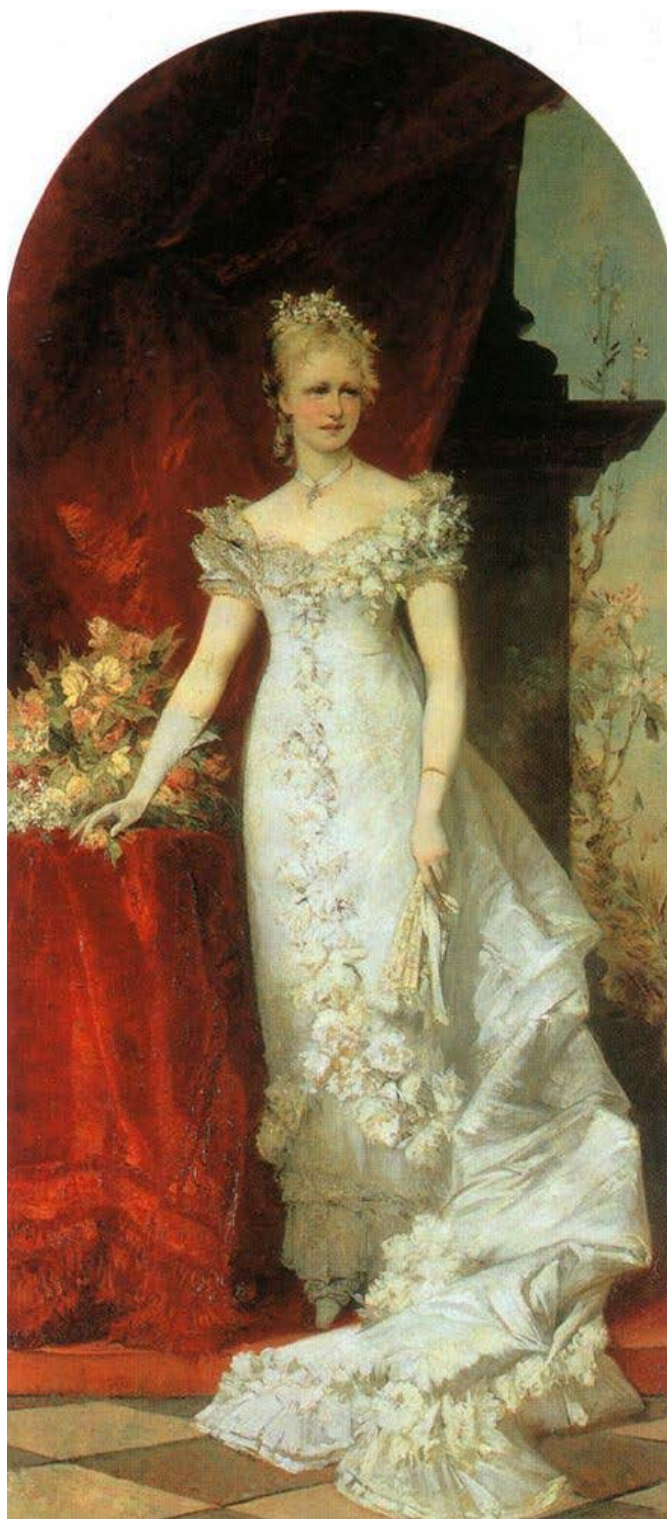Figure 5. Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Eugenia Primavesi,* 1913, oil on canvas, Privately Owned

Figure 6. Hans Makart, *The Portrait of Crown Princess Stephanie*, oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Figure 7. Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I,* 1907, Oil on Canvas, Neue Gallery, New York

Figure 8. Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Baroness Elisabeth Bachofen-Echt,* 1914, Oil on canvas, Privately owned

Figure 9. Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Margarethe Stonborough-Wittgenstein,* 1905

Figure 10. Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Mada Primavesi,* 1912, Oil on canvas, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 11. Gustav Klimt, *Judith I*, Oil on Canvas, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

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