



GUSTAV
KLIMT

W&K
WIENERROITHER & KOHLBACHER

GUSTAV
KLIMT
1914



GUSTAV KLIMT

(1862 – 1918)

14 DRAWINGS

TEXTS BY MARIAN BISANZ-PRAKKEN
TRANSLATION: ELIZABETH CLEGG

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W&K
EDITION

1 STUDY FOR THE LEFT-HAND FIGURE OF THE "THREE GORGONS" IN THE BEETHOVEN FRIEZE, 1901

STUDIE FÜR DIE LINKE FIGUR DER "DREI GORGONEN" IM BEETHOVENFRIES, 1901

Black chalk on paper, 452 x 312 mm

Estate stamp at lower right: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

Inscribed at lower right: R

Provenance

Reininghaus Collection, Vienna. – Lederer Collection, Vienna.

Exhibition

Nuda Veritas: Gustav Klimt and the Origins of the Vienna Secession 1895-1905, Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, September 2010 –January 2011.

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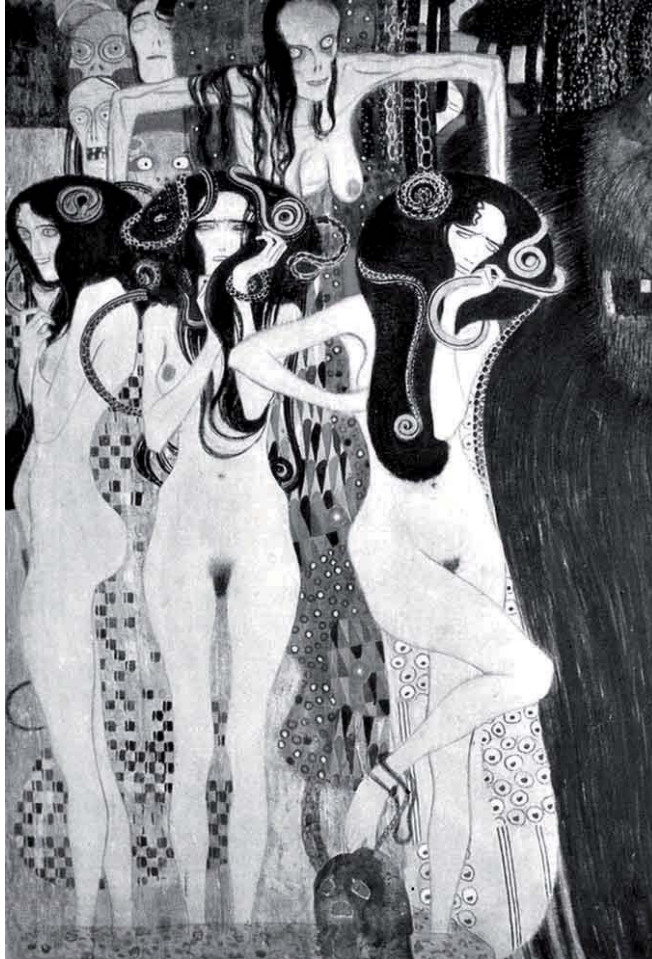
Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Gustav Klimt. Der Beerhovensfries. Geschichte, Funktion und Bedeutung*, Salzburg 1977, p. 115, plate 17. – Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. I: 1878-1903*, Salzburg 1980, no. 786. – Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Nuda Veritas: Gustav Klimt and the Origins of the Vienna Secession 1895-1905*, exh. cat. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 2010/11, no. 36, fig. p. 77.

Three sheets are of particular importance within the present selection. These all belong to the extensive series (now distributed between collections across the globe) of Gustav Klimt's preparatory studies for his *Beethoven Frieze*. This outstanding figural cycle was created in the context of the Vienna Secession's Beethoven Exhibition, which opened in April 1902, and at which a group of 21 artists strove to realize – albeit only temporarily – their ideal of a modern "temple art". The tripartite interior of this "sacred space", designed by Josef Hoffmann, was of an emphatic simplicity. Its design, wall decoration, and ornamental elements served to direct attention to the "cult object" in the principal hall: the freshly completed monumental figure of *Beethoven* by the Leipzig sculptor, painter and print-maker Max Klinger.



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KLIMT
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Gustav Klimt, *The Beethoven Frieze - Three Gorgons* (detail), 1901/02
Belvedere (Secession), Vienna

Many saw this figure, enthroned on clouds, as the quintessence of the artist as genius, struggling and suffering for humanity. In accord with this symbolism, the "temple decorations" contrived by the artists of the Secession were themselves conceived in the spirit of struggle and triumph, of desire and redemption. Through the colourful diversity of materials used in his figure of *Beethoven*, Klinger also inspired his Viennese colleagues to undertake numerous experiments with new materials and techniques.

As the most celebrated artist of the Secession, Gustav Klimt was to occupy a prominent position within this solemnly festive ensemble, working in an unorthodox combination of casein paint, decorative elements, and stucco mouldings. During the summer of 1901 he set out to paint, on the two long walls and one of the short walls of the left-hand side room, a large-scale allegory of the human desire for happiness.¹ According to the description supplied in the exhibition catalogue, the

figures of desire seen floating along the top of the painted walls soar beyond the *Hostile Powers* and will be "assuaged" through *Poetry*. Humanity achieves its greatest happiness in the fusion of art and love: in the "ideal realm", towards which "the arts" lead us, an enamoured couple is seen embracing, surrounded by a choir of angels. With reference to this last scene, two quotations from Friedrich Schiller allude to the final chorus of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; "Freude, schöner Götterfunke" [Joy, beautiful spark of divinity] and "diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt" [this kiss for the entire world]. The overall concept of the

¹ According to the most recent findings, Klimt had already completed the painting of his *Beethoven Frieze* during the summer of 1901, which would indicate that the studies long dated to 1901/02 should in fact be dated to 1901. See: Hansjörg Krug, "Gustav Klimt selbstredend", in: Tobias Natter, ed., *Gustav Klimt: Sämtliche Gemälde*, Cologne 2012, p. 488, undated letter (August 1901) no. 80 to Marie Zimmermann. As reported by contemporary critics, even shortly before the repeatedly postponed exhibition opening, Klimt was still to be observed at work on the scaffold erected to give access to the *Frieze*.

Beethoven Frieze evinces unmistakable analogies with Richard Wagner's "programmatic commentary" on the Ninth Symphony: a musical creation that, by around 1900, was providing inspiration for many pseudo-religious utopias.²

For Klimt, his work on the plastered surfaces of Hoffmann's extremely modern interior was an altogether independent exercise, in the course of which he was able to develop his composition without constraints. He experimented with a dazzling diversity of abstract-geometrical ornaments, in which gold played a great part; and, to complement the planarity of the painting, Klimt opted for a radically new use of line. These crucial stylistic shifts occurred both in his painting and in his work as a draughtsman. In his preparatory figure studies Klimt already incorporates the principle of his adherence to Hoffmann's purist architecture through subordinating the movements and gestures of his models to strict geometric laws. He emphasises frontal and profile poses and eschews the use of shading to model surfaces. By means of emphatically stylising contours, he brings out the always specific character of his figures.

The first two of our three drawings for the *Beethoven Frieze* were made in connection with figures to be found on the short wall that links the two longer ones: the *Hostile Powers*, embodying a highly decorative denunciation of sensual and material pleasure. It was above all the *Three Gorgons* – convivial companions of the monster Typhoeus – that were found to be especially shocking. The numerous studies for these provocative female figures are distinguished through their sensually curved contours and their loosely falling, buoyantly stylised hair. The present drawing (1), a relatively close approximation to the left-hand *Gorgon*, strikes us as the quintessence of the *femme fatale*. Her clenched fingers, mouth convulsed with carnal desire, and eyes wide open like those of a mad woman all hint at daemonic possession. Klimt wields his black chalk with particular sensitivity. In combination with packing paper, cut into sheets always equal in size, this was to remain his chief drawing medium until 1903/04.

Almost all the models for figures in the *Beethoven Frieze* whom Klimt shows standing are cropped just above the feet by the lower edge of the sheet. Our figure, too, appears to have been lifted off the earth by this intervention. At one and the same time she remains in an indeterminate void and yet is also unshakably anchored to the drawing surface. Here, a strict monumentality is counterbalanced by the sensual melody of line. Ambivalence of this sort was to characterise Klimt's figure drawings throughout his career.

² The connection with Richard Wagner's programmatic elucidation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was first noted in Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Gustav Klimt. Der Beethovenfries. Geschichte, Funktion und Bedeutung*, Salzburg 1877, pp. 32-34.

2 STUDY FOR "LUST" IN THE BEETHOVEN FRIEZE, 1901

STUDIE FÜR "WOLLUST" IM BEETHOVENFRIES, 1901

Black chalk on paper, 447 x 312 mm, Inscribed at lower left: R

Provenance

Reininghaus Collection, Vienna. – August Lederer, Vienna. – Erich Lederer, Vienna. – Private collection, Austria.

Bibliography

Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Gustav Klimt. Der Beethovenfries. Geschichte, Funktion und Bedeutung*, Salzburg 1977, p. 141, plate 40. – Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. I: 1878-1903*, Salzburg 1980, no. 815.

The study of the reclining nude propped up on one elbow (2) was made for the figure of *Lust*, whose body in the painted version of the composition was to be largely concealed by those of her companions, *Lewdness* and *Excess*. In the *Frieze* itself all that remains visible is her face: smiling inwardly as if absorbed in her own thoughts, with closed eyes and enveloping gold-blond hair. Among the heretofore identified drawings of the figure of *Lust*, who in the *Frieze* is shown sitting upright, this horizontally arranged pose is an exception. Employing outlines that are energetic and, at the same time, sensitive, Klimt plots the rounded body forms of the plump model, who with her smiling, dreamy expression appears fully self-absorbed. Among the *Hostile Powers* she represents, in contrast to the bewitching *Gorgons*, an unaggressive pure sensuality. The symbolism of the linearly stylised rendering of the hair, which attests to the influence of the Dutch Symbolist Jan Toorop, plays an overwhelming role in the *Beethoven Frieze* and also constitutes the particular charm of this drawing.





3 STUDY FOR "POETRY" IN THE BEETHOVEN FRIEZE, 1901

STUDIE FÜR "DIE POESIE" IM BEETHOVENFRIES, 1901

Black chalk on paper, 439 x 327 mm

Inscribed at lower left: R

Provenance

Reininghaus Collection, Vienna. – Galerie Wolfgang Gurlitt, Munich. – Private collection, Switzerland.

Exhibition

Nuda Veritas: Gustav Klimt and the Beginnings of the Vienna Secession 1895-1905, exh. cat. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, September 2010 – January 2011.

Gustav Klimt: The Magic of Line, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, July – September 2012.

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Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. I: 1878-1903*, Salzburg 1980, no. 830. – Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Nuda Veritas: Gustav Klimt and the Beginnings of the Vienna Secession 1895-1905*, exh. cat. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 2010/11, no. 39, fig. p. 78. – Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Gustav Klimt. The Magic of Line*, exh. cat. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2012, no. 61, fig. p. 122.

The luminous, idealised figure of *Poetry* (3) is to be counted among the "good" personifications that appear on the final long wall, their brightness and harmony diametrically opposed to the chaotic tangle of the *Hostile Powers*. The figure seen in profile, inspired by those of Greek Antiquity and shown playing a kithara, appears with her inclined head to be fully absorbed in a world of her own. The preparatory studies demonstrate how deeply Klimt penetrated, in exploring variations of pose and gesture, into the essence of this personification. It is for this reason that he had both clothed and unclothed models pose for him.



R



Gustav Klimt, *The Beethoven Frieze - Lust, Lewdness and Excess* (detail), 1901/02
Belvedere (Secession), Vienna



Gustav Klimt, *The Beethoven Frieze - Poetry* (detail), 1901/02
Belvedere (Secession), Vienna

The studies for *Poetry* hint at spiritually profound, Modernist variations on a motif found on a Greek vase. The tensed outlines of the nude seen here, monumental in its planarity, are of an archaic rigor, and there is particular emphasis on the angular stylisation of the gestures of music-making, which are especially accentuated. A concentrated self-absorption is conveyed, here above all through the contours of the inclined neck and head, the withdrawn facial expression, and the emphatically vertical fall of the hair. In his painted version of *Poetry* Klimt did not return to the motif of the feet wrapped in what appears to be a veil; but in the final scene, showing *Paradise*, the feet of the two lovers are entwined in a veil formed of blue lines. This symbolic formula was thereafter to be used by Klimt above all to emphasise the metaphysical character of his figures.

In conclusion it should be said that no groups of Klimt's preparatory studies for his paintings appear as homogeneous and as self-contained as does the complex of drawings made in connection with the *Beethoven Frieze*. The unique position of these seemingly autonomous works lies above all in their affinity with the corresponding painted images. For Klimt as a draughtsman and as a painter, after the "Beethoven experiment" there was no going back.■

4 PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN IN A FUR BOA, 1904/05

BILDNIS EINER JUNGEN FRAU MIT PELZBOA, 1904/05

Pencil, black chalk and red crayon, with white heightening on paper, 540 x 344 mm

Provenance

August Lederer, Vienna. – Erich Lederer, Geneva. – Private collection, Munich.

Exhibition

Gustav Klimt – Egon Schiele. Zeichnungen und Aquarelle, Albertina, Vienna, 5 April – 16 June 1968, no. 79, plate IV.

Bibliography

Gilhofer portfolio: *Gustav Klimt: 25 Handzeichnungen*, Vienna 1919, no. 5 – Arthur Schnitzler, *„Spiel im Morgengrauen“ und andere Erzählungen*, sel. & intr. Hans Weigel, with drawings by Gustav Klimt, Frankfurt am Main 1961, fig. on p. 25. – Fritz Novotny and Johannes Dobai, *Gustav Klimt*, Salzburg 1967, p. 65. – *Gustav Klimt. One hundred drawings*, intr. Alfred Werner, New York 1972, no. 33, with illus. – Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. II: 1904–1912*, Salzburg 1982, no. 1208.

The young lady shown here, as regards both her physiognomy and her artfully dressed hair, might well seem as if related to Klimt's subject now known as the "English Woman". As Klimt's erstwhile friend Erich Lederer reported in his old age, the artist had greatly admired this creature of seemingly porcelain perfection and in 1904 had drawn her many times.¹

Alice Strobl dated somewhat later – to around 1904/05 – the present portrait, in which Klimt's attention is focused on a face caressed by a fur boa. Using a soft pencil, he begins by defining the principal outlines, thereafter strengthening or varying these, expressly incorporating slight formal shifts. In a lively fashion, he emphasises the outlines of the nose, the smiling lips, the corners of the eyes, and further details. Finally, with a slender black chalk he picks out the eyebrows, the eyelashes, and the pupils. The interplay between the deep black of the chalk, the silvery grey of the pencil, and

¹ See Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. I: 1904–1912*, Salzburg 1982, nos. 1185 – 1208.



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the pale tone of the paper lends a jewel-like gleam to the eyes. Klimt distributes his emphases with great precision, the deepest black occurring in the pupil of the eye that is closest to us and fixes its gaze upon us. Characteristically, this pupil is not presented as a dark point, but as if it were a linear ornament. The pale red of the lips and the barely visible white heightening of the fur boa complete this delicate colouring.

The markedly decorative character of this creative procedure is closely connected to the decisive shift that occurred in around 1904 in Klimt's approach to drawing. The packing paper he initially employed gave way to a paler paper, Japanese in origin and of a larger, standard size; and black chalk was replaced by pencil, with the frequent addition of blue and red crayon and white heightening. The drawings produced in parallel with the paintings of Klimt's early Golden Style convey a new, exclusive materiality, the glint of the graphite combining with the pale shimmer of the Japanese paper. Like many drawings made in and after 1904, those depicting the "English Woman", as also the present, elaborately signed sheet,² were produced as works of art in their own right. The linear momentum of the innovative studies for the *Beethoven Frieze* (see nos. 1– 3) seems a world away from the acute precision of the drawings made in 1904 and beyond. ■

² The so-called "oval signature" that Klimt only applied to drawings that he regarded as especially valuable is here already fully developed and so must have been added at a later date. See Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. IV: 1878–1918, Nachtrag*, Salzburg 1989, p. 214.



5 THREE FEMALE FRIENDS, 1905/06

DREI FREUNDINNEN, 1905/06

Blue crayon on paper, 520 x 345 mm

Estate stamp at lower left: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

Provenance

E.W.Kornfeld, Bern – Patrick Derom Gallery, Brussels – Private collection, Holland

Exhibition

Gustav Klimt 1862-1918 Die Zeichnungen, Albertina, Vienna 1962, no. 127 – Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, Klimt/Schiele/Kokoschka und die Frauen, 22 October 2015 – 28 February 2016.

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Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. II: 1904-1912*, Salzburg 1982, no. 1505, illus. on p. 84.

In Klimt's paintings *Water Serpents I* and *Water Serpents II*, both produced between 1904 and 1907, mysterious water creatures drift along parallel to the picture plane: in the first case vertically, firmly locked in one another's arms, in the second horizontally, with their bodies tightly overlapping. It was in this context that Klimt, in his role as a draughtsman, addressed with great passion the theme of lesbian love. Between 1904 and 1906 the playful eroticism of these groups of female figures inspired the artist to make countless studies that, in their unerring balance and their linear precision, may be seen as works of art in their own right.

The present drawing, executed in blue crayon, was made at the same time as the studies that Klimt produced in 1905/06 in preparation for the final version of the painting. In the view of Alice Strobl, this sheet might have had a connection with the thematically related drawings that Klimt provided for the 1907 publication *Hetaerengespräche* [Dialogues of the Courtesans]. Two models – one reclining



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KALIMT
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Gustav Klimt, *Water Serpents II*, 1904-07, oil on canvas, private collection

diagonally on her stomach, like a "water serpent", and the other, with crossed legs, sitting on the edge of the bed – are absorbed in a free and easy conversation. The outlines of what may be the substantial hip of a third model seems to be indicated at the upper left – Alice Strobl herself listed the drawing as "Three Friends" – although it is not unthinkable

that Klimt in fact intended this angle to indicate the far edge of the corner that would house the bed. This tireless draughtsman spontaneously adopted an elevated viewing position, looking down on the women from above; and he established, in this tall-format "snapshot", a striking relationship between space and surface. While he positions the figures towards the upper edge of the sheet, he allows much room for the perspectively rendered surface of the bed. The vertical line of its right edge runs parallel to the nearby edge of the sheet, thus compellingly leading the viewer's eye upwards, the diagonal line running from the stomach of the reclining figure to the intimate tête-à-tête. The focus in the composition is on the powerfully accentuated facial features of the figure reclining on her stomach, who here appears about to recount something to her friend whose back is turned to us.

Characteristically for Klimt, there thus came about in this drawing a thrilling dialogue between sensually animated contours and geometric forms, between extended emptiness and structural density and, not least, between ease and discipline. Klimt's perpetual tightrope-walk between such extremes here, too, distinguishes the unmistakable quality of his line. ■



6 STANDING PREGNANT WOMAN, 1907/08 (STUDY MADE IN CONNECTION WITH "HOPE II")

STEHENDE SCHWANGERE, 1907/08
(STUDIE IN ZUSAMMENHANG MIT "HOFFNUNG II")

Red crayon on paper, 560 x 370 mm

Estate stamp at lower right: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

Provenance

Private collection, Austria

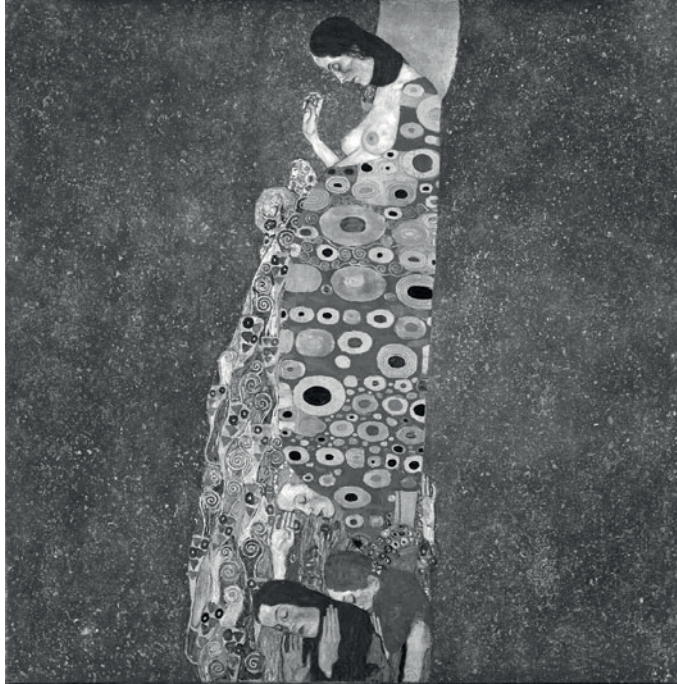
This work will be included in Marian Bisanz-Prakken's Supplement to Alice Strobl's catalogue raisonné of Gustav Klimt's drawings.

This previously unpublished red crayon drawing of a naked standing pregnant woman was produced in the context of preparations for the painting *Hope II (Vision)*, of 1907/08, one of the chief works of Klimt's Golden Style. For Klimt, the subject of burgeoning life held a particular allure. For his painting *Hope I* (1903/04), in which a radiant young woman, naked and heavily pregnant, is oppressed by grim monsters, he had in 1902 already made many subtle drawn studies of expectant mothers – be it as single figures or accompanied by a man.

The wide range of figure studies associated, either directly or more loosely, with *Hope II* date from between 1904 and 1907/08. In that square-format painting a pregnant figure viewed in profile stands against an abstract, gold-sprinkled background, her pale, lowered face bearing the imprint of sorrow. Her long, richly ornamented cloak envelops her entirely, except for her breast, a portion of her swollen belly, and the skull that nestles up to it. Along the picture's lower edge gaunt figures, their hands placed together as if in prayer, appear gathered in front of her.

Within the heterogeneous group of studies of models in various stages of pregnancy – standing, seated, or reclining, clothed or unclothed – we find two opposed categories. The haggard, seemingly melancholy figures are, for the most part, characterised by sunken faces and angular poses and gestures. These drawn figures are closest to the main figure in the painting, both outwardly and in terms of its spiritual resonance. Unencumbered, however, by pessimist symbolism are those autonomous drawings,





Gustav Klimt, *Hope II (Vision)*, 1907/08, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

continuous rhythmic outlines he subtly plays off against one another the broad curves – in particular those of the belly – and the most prominent features. He lays particular emphasis on the pubic hair, the navel, and the nipples; and, above all, he makes the luxuriance of the long, thick plait into a decorative visual focus. Red, “the colour of life”, had already been used in many of the drawn studies for *Hope I*. In the present drawing it imparts to the swollen belly an almost magical radiance. ■

in which Klimt explores the earthly reality of pregnancy. For all the rooted vitality of the women depicted, Klimt succeeds in sublimating this quality through the brilliance of his use of line.

The present nude study belongs to the latter category: in the standing profile pose and the hands folded behind the back, the figure may be associated with three other studies, all of them published.¹ Unusually for Klimt, the young woman is shown standing at full length: her feet are not cropped by the lower edge of the sheet, and she does indeed wear shoes. This compositional independence gives her an easy, relaxed air. But Klimt does not abandon his linear discipline. Through

¹ Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. II: 1904-1912*, Salzburg 1982, nos. 1773-1775.



7 TWO LOVERS STANDING LOCKED IN AN EMBRACE, 1907/08

STEHENDES LIEBESPAAR, 1907/08
Study for *Fulfilment* (mosaic frieze for Palais Stoclet)

Pencil on paper, 571 x 371 mm

Estate stamp at lower left: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

PROVENANCE

Serge Sabarsky Gallery, New York

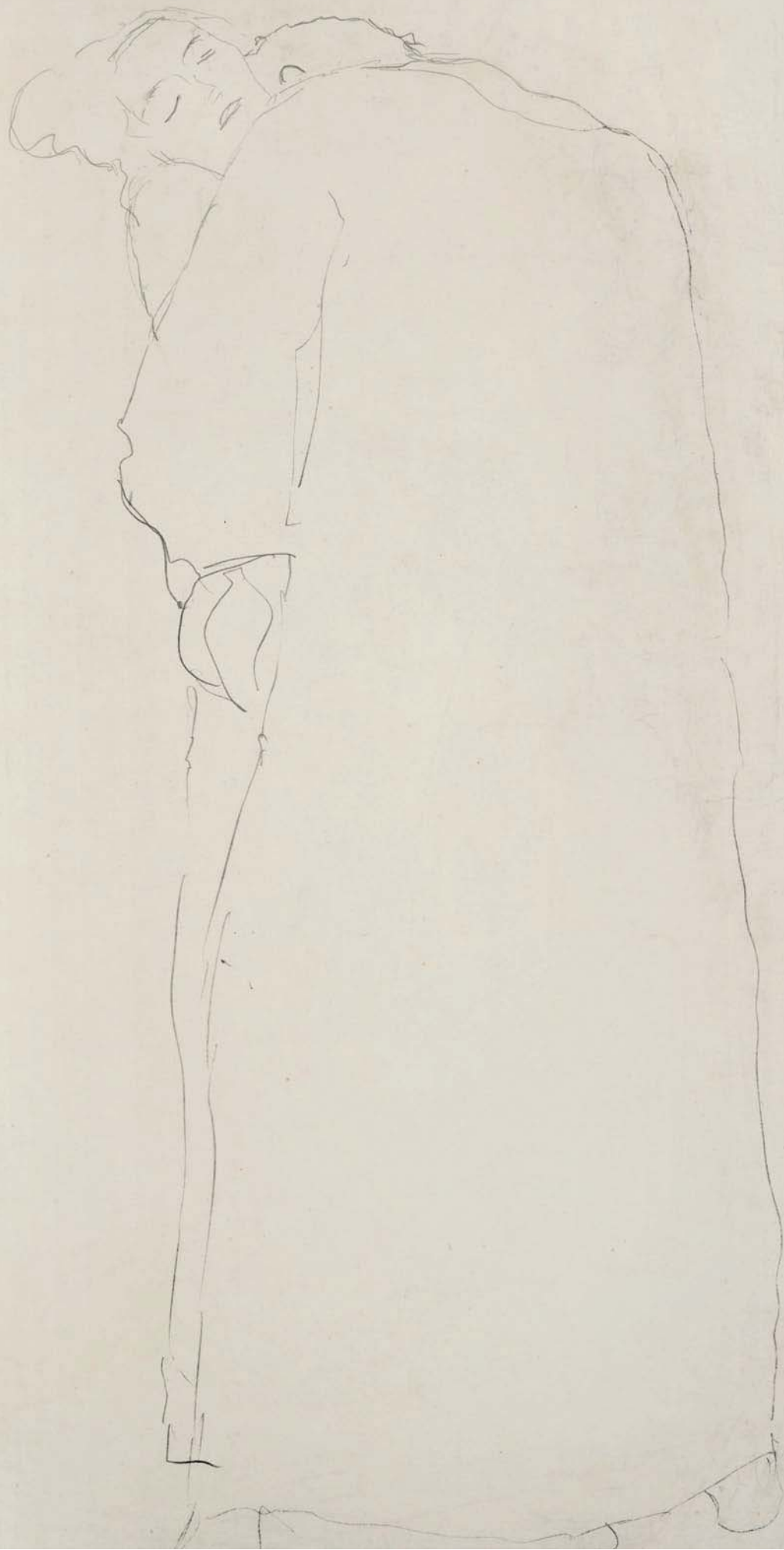
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Fulfilment, a depiction of two lovers standing locked in an embrace, is the final, and probably the best known, segment in the mosaic frieze completed in 1911 for the dining room of the Palais Stoclet in Brussels. Designed by Gustav Klimt, it was executed by a carefully chosen team of craftsmen and -women from the Wiener Werkstätte. No less celebrated than this segment of the mosaic is the full-scale cartoon that Klimt prepared for it, working in paint with gold and silver on tracing paper.¹ This and the other cartoons were in turn the outcome of a period of intense preparatory work. Most of the resulting studies for *Fulfilment* were made in 1907/08, at the same time as the thematically related drawings produced in connection with Klimt's now world-famous painting *The Kiss*.² In both groups of works on paper – and it is not always possible to plot the dividing line between them – Klimt was concerned to intensify the treatment of his chosen theme: love between a man and a woman. In these largely autonomous creations, most of which have only a loose formal connection with the intended final composition, Klimt brings all his psychological sensitivity to rendering the subtle give and take that occurs within a couple.

The present work is among the studies of embracing lovers that do have a direct formal connection with the final version of the composition.³ Just as in the full-scale cartoons, so too in this sheet, the

¹ Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. II: 1904-1912*, Salzburg 1982, no. 1811.



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Gustav Klimt, *Fulfillment*, (detail from cartoon for mosaic frieze for Palais Stoclet), 1910, MAK, Vienna

his work as a painter, Klimt as a draughtsman understood, as never before, that the figure as directly observed required formal harnessing as well as both sensual and spiritual animation. ■

man and the woman are enveloped in long robes; and again, in both cases, the figure of the passively receptive woman is almost entirely masked by that of the man, who is viewed from the back in a sturdy straddling pose and who is emphatically her opposite in both his muscular exertion and his vigour. At the same time, there are a number of important aspects in which the figures seen here differ from those in the final version. While, in the latter, Klimt gives expression to the man / woman polarity above all through a festive ornamentation, in the drawing he employs a remarkable linear economy to accentuate particular emotional and sensual qualities. Here, the man clasps the woman to his breast, appearing to bury his inclined face in her neck. Yet in her own face, which is visible to us, thrown back and as if entranced, we find the evidence of all her erotic and spiritual rapture. Male energy, by contrast, is revealed in the powerful undulation of the tensed muscles of the back, as in the taut outlines of the voluminous kimono. Now, at the height of the "golden style" in

2 Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. II: 1904-1912*, Salzburg 1982, pp. 162-164.

3 Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. II: 1904-1912*, Salzburg 1982, nos. 1795-1796; *ibid. IV: 1878-1918, Nachtrag*, Salzburg 1989, nos. 3615, 3615a, 3616.



8 RECLINING FIGURE PROPPED UP ON HER ELBOWS, STUDY MADE IN CONNECTION WITH "JUDITH II" ("SALOME"), around 1908

AUFGESTÜTZT LIEGENDE, STUDIE ZUR "JUDITH II" ("SALOME"),
um 1908

Pencil on paper, 373 x 559 mm

Estate stamp at lower right: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

Verso inscribed in pencil: 66

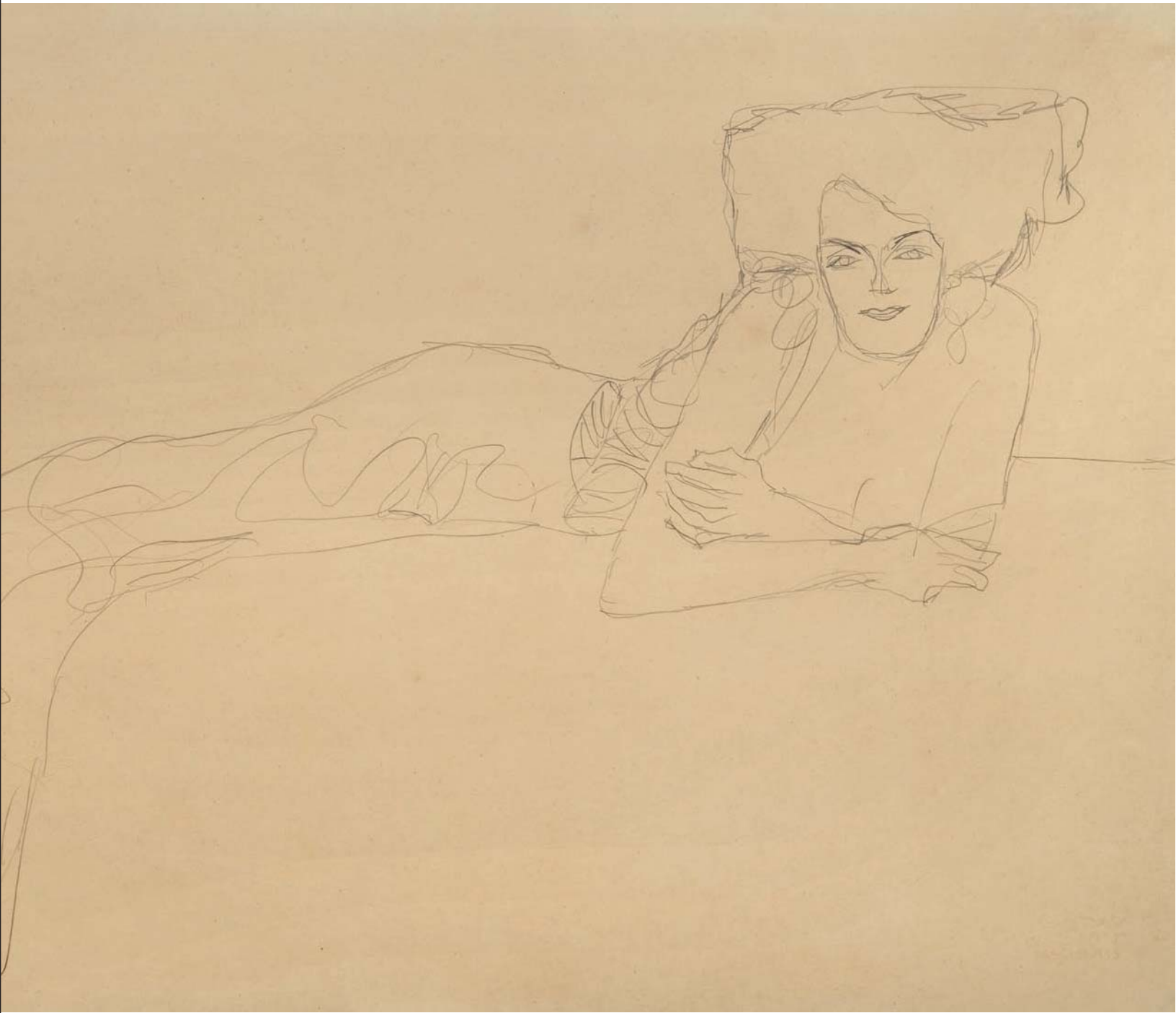
Bibliography

Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. IV: 1878-1918, Nachtrag*, Salzburg 1989, no. 3604

The painting *Judith II*, completed in 1909 (*Judith I* had been produced eight years earlier), was from an early date also known as *Salome*, a title that has now found general acceptance. In favour of this interpretation is the garishly exaggerated rendering of this Biblical *femme fatale*, a king's daughter, from whose clenched fingers hangs the severed head of John the Baptist, after whom she had lusted in vain. In addition, the flimsy scarves spilling from her naked breast would appear to allude to the Dance of Seven Veils with which Salome had obtained her vile reward from her infatuated step-father, Herod.

While in the seated, forward-bending half figure in the painting Klimt had hinted at the subject of the dance only through the abundance of colourfully ornamental veils, in the studies made in 1907/08 he went substantially





further. Seeking to explore the Salome theme with a greater intensity, he had a slender model, with her hair pinned up into a bouffant wedge, adopt a variety of dance-like positions. By this means he repeatedly arrived at a highly refined alternation between fabrics, registered with animated linear structures, and naked limbs: a coquettishly raised leg, a bared shoulder, an elegantly bent arm or flexed wrist.

It was within this context that the present drawing was made. But the model with the distinctive hair-do is not posed as a dancer. Klimt has apparently recorded her here "off duty", in a relaxed, reclining posture, yet propped up on her elbows. His rapid notation of this pose may have challenged him to embark, in a most refined fashion, on playing distinctly separate forms off against empty spaces. Across the oblong drawing surface he plots various segments of space: the edge of the bed, the parallelogram formed by the line of the shoulders and that of the folded arms. These are then set into a thrilling visual dialogue with both the angular wedge of the model's pinned-up hair and the undulating forms of the drapery around the lower half of her body. The balance, characteristic of Klimt, between a strict planarity and organically enlivened line, leaves its distinctive mark also upon this drawing, where the focus is on the model's almost private glance at the draughtsman. ■

Gustav Klimt, *Judith II (Salome)*, 1909, Ca' Pesaro, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna, Musei Civici, Venice





9 SEATED GIRL, 1912/13

SITZENDES MÄDCHEN, 1912/13
Study for the portrait of Mäda Primavesi

Pencil on paper, 559 x 367 mm

Provenance

Felix Landau Gallery, Los Angeles

Private collection, Los Angeles

Exhibition

Gustav Klimt und Henri Matisse. Internationale der Zeichnung, Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt 1970, no. 137 (illus.)

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Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. II: 1904–1912*, Salzburg 1982, no. 2117a.

Mäda Primavesi was the daughter of the banker Otto Primavesi – one of the most important patrons of the Wiener Werkstätte – and his wife, Eugenia. Gustav Klimt, who had become a friend of the Primavesi family, painted in rapid succession a portrait of the nine- to ten-year-old Mäda and of her mother. Klimt's portrait *Mäda Primavesi*, his only formally commissioned record of a child, was completed not long before Christmas 1913. Wearing a short white dress and with straddled legs, the girl poses against a brightly coloured background evocative of a fantastical landscape.

As in the studies for his portrait of Mäda's mother, Klimt endeavoured, through a series of sketches, to capture the essence of his young model, evidently making particular allowances for the child's





Gustav Klimt, *Mäda Primavesi*, 1913, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

more attention here than in his other drawings of Mäda to the cushions among which she sits: these are suggestive of a landscape, and this is perhaps already a hint at the solution he was eventually to adopt in his painting. ■

characteristic vivacity. He captures Mäda dressed for comfort and in all her naturalness as she adopts a number of different poses: seated with loosely dangling legs, viewed from the front and from the side, standing with her hands on her hips or hanging at her sides. With short pencil strokes, he registers the shifting facial expressions of this child with such a lust for life.

In this study elements such as the strictly frontal presentation of the girl, whose glance is slightly raised, are offset by factors such as the loose strokes with which Klimt renders her shoulder-length hair, her dress slightly runched up above her knees, her folded hands or her dangling legs. Wilful geometric accents within the pattern of the dress – two powerful vertical lines and one horizontal – anchor the seated figure within the plane and maintain a lively dialogue with the animated structure of the fabric. Klimt pays



10 SEMI-RECLINING FEMALE NUDE IN BACK VIEW, c 1912

LIEGENDER, HALBABGESTÜTZTER RÜCKENAKT, UM 1912

Pencil on paper, 560 x 366 mm

Estate stamp at lower right: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

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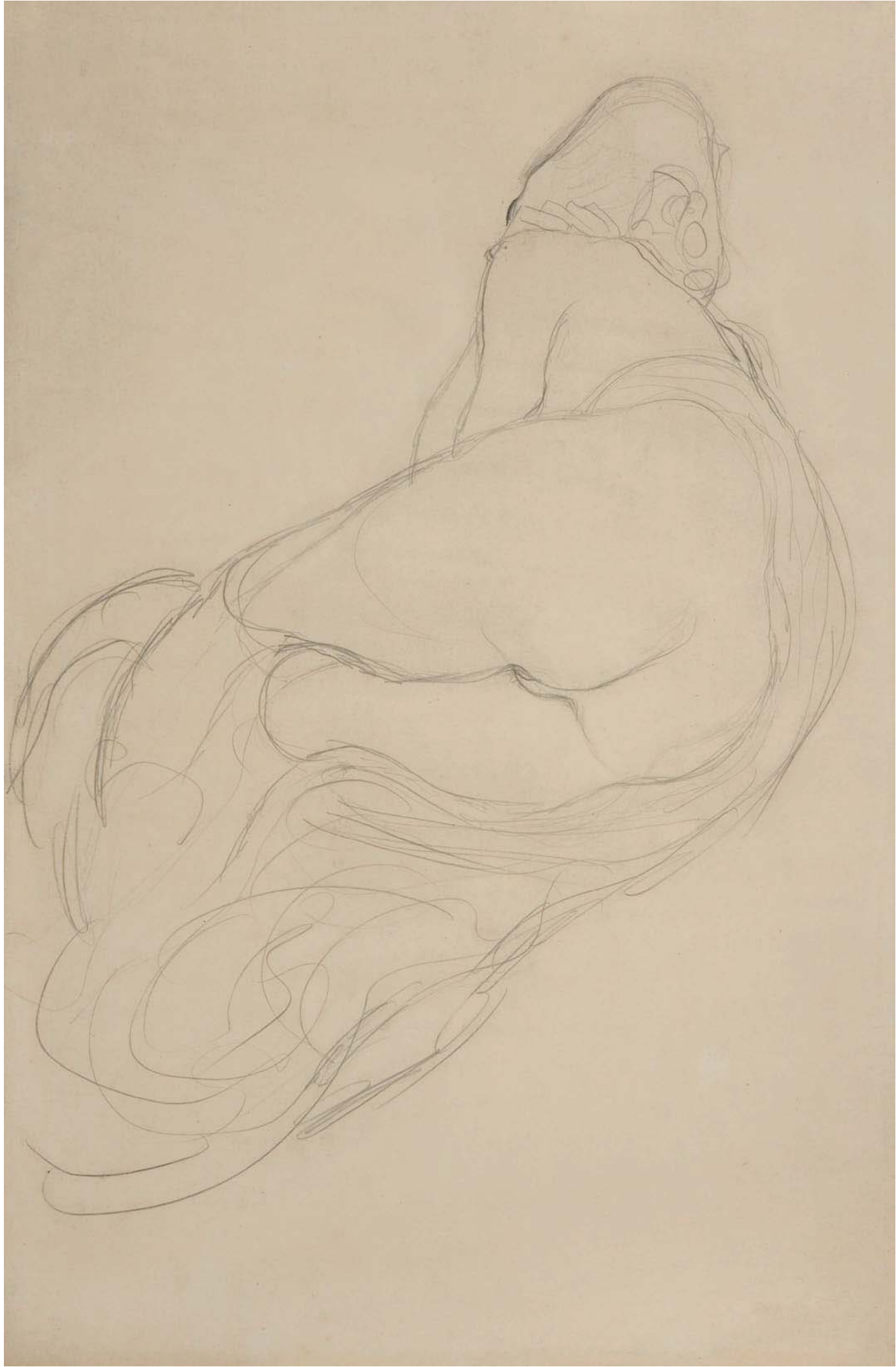
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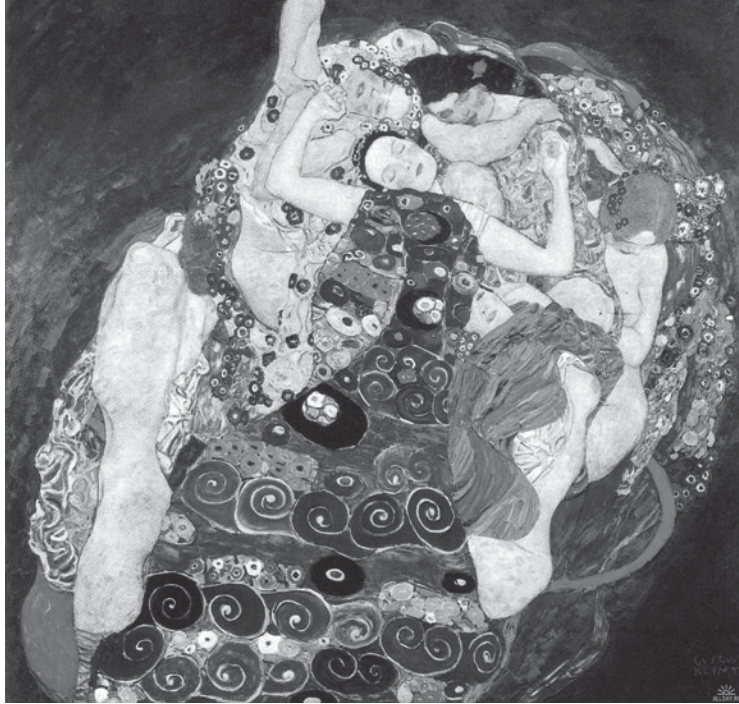
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Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. IV: 1878-1918, Nachtrag*, Salzburg 1989, no. 3656.

Gustav Klimt's painting *The Virgin*, which was exhibited for the first time in January 1913 in Budapest, is among the outstanding works of the later years of his career. At the centre of a formation resembling a bubble we find the composition's eponymous principal figure, stylised into planarity, wearing a dreamy expression, and surrounded by six companions of an altogether more "realistic" appearance. Among the typologically very diverse figures there is revealed a broad range of temperaments and moods. A new element in Klimt's work is the circling movement of the figural group, reinforced by the sinuous poses of the women, whose curvaceous bodies gleam between the swirl of brightly coloured drapery.

Here, Klimt as a draughtsman engages thoroughly with the various stages of sensual awareness through which he believed all of womankind to be led as in a dream. In sheet after sheet he explored the moods and erotic states of woman, experimenting with the greatest diversity of bodily types. In the blunt nakedness of his models, he often went much further than in the final painted composition.





Gustav Klimt, *The Virgin*, 1913, oil on canvas, Národní Galerie, Prague

Alice Strobl saw a connection between the earlier of our two drawings, showing a model semi-reclining on her side, and a group of studies in which Klimt returned again and again to the motif of the jutting hindquarters.¹ The drawing on our sheet is centred on the powerful buttocks and thighs and, between the latter, the subtle graphic acknowledgement of the vulva. Caressed by the sweeping drapery, this part of the model's body assumes an even greater radiance. For all the sensuality and linear animation, Klimt here nonetheless submits to a strict formal discipline. He subsumes the spatial complexity of the figure to a hermetic overall form, which he

aligns, in a carefully calculated way, with the plane. Characteristically for Klimt, there is throughout a perfect balance between what is erotic, even to the point of causing offence, and the expression of a desire to withdraw from the world. The lost-profile presentation of the face of the depicted woman is hidden almost entirely below her raised shoulder.

¹ Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. III: 1912-1918*, Salzburg 1984, nos. 2201-2208; *ibid. IV: 1878-1918, Nachtrag*, Salzburg 1989, nos. 3650-3656.

² Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. III: 1912-1918*, Salzburg 1984, nos. 2276-2285; *ibid. IV: 1878-1918, Nachtrag*, Salzburg 1989, nos. 3661-3663.



11 RECLINING SEMI-NUDE WITH ARMS CROSSED ABOVE HER HEAD, 1914/15

LIEGENDER HALBAKT, DIE ARME ÜBER DEN KOPF VERSCHRÄNKT, 1914/15

Pencil on paper, 545 x 360 mm

Estate stamp at lower right: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

Provenance

Johann Georg, Prince de Saxe – Private collection, Switzerland.

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The oscillation between sensuality and meditation, between body and soul, is characteristic of many studies that Klimt made in connection with his plans for *The Virgin* and of the works that followed it. The autonomous drawing of a reclining model viewed from above, which Alice Strobl dated to around 1914/15, unavoidably recalls the studies made in about 1912 for the chief figure in *The Virgin*.²

Unlike the plump, more mature woman of the type found in the previous drawing, we see here a young girl who appears to shield her dreamy, averted face with a childlike gesture of her folded arms. But in emphatic contrast to this shyness is the display of her pubis, revealed by the runched-up clothing. The slightly parted thighs are a motivic resort to the dancing pose of the legs of the central figure in *The Virgin*. In our drawing the model, though shown reclining, seems almost to rise into a void, like a dancer in a diagonal upward movement. In his electrifyingly eloquent use of line, Klimt appears effortlessly to master the balance between sensual presence and metaphysical weightlessness. ■



1912
MAY 15
1912

12 RECLINING SEMI-NUDE WITH AN ARM CONCEALING HER MOUTH, 1914/15

LIEGENDER HALBAKT, DEN MUND MIT DEM ARM VERDECKEND, 1914/15

Pencil on paper, 475 x 570 mm

Estate stamp at lower left: GUSTAV / KLIMT / NACHLASS

Exhibition

Experiment Weltuntergang: Wien um 1900, Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1981, cat. no. 53.

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In the erotic studies of his later years Klimt continued to embrace the strict compositional scheme of the figure aligned parallel to the picture plane. In horizontal sheets the figure's position is invariably related to a situation of intimate eroticism. Klimt would make a very close study of each of his horizontally, or very slightly diagonally, extended models as she indulged her own erotic desires, finding a particular fascination in the co-existence of the passive, reclining pose and the suggestion of movement. Here, too, in this

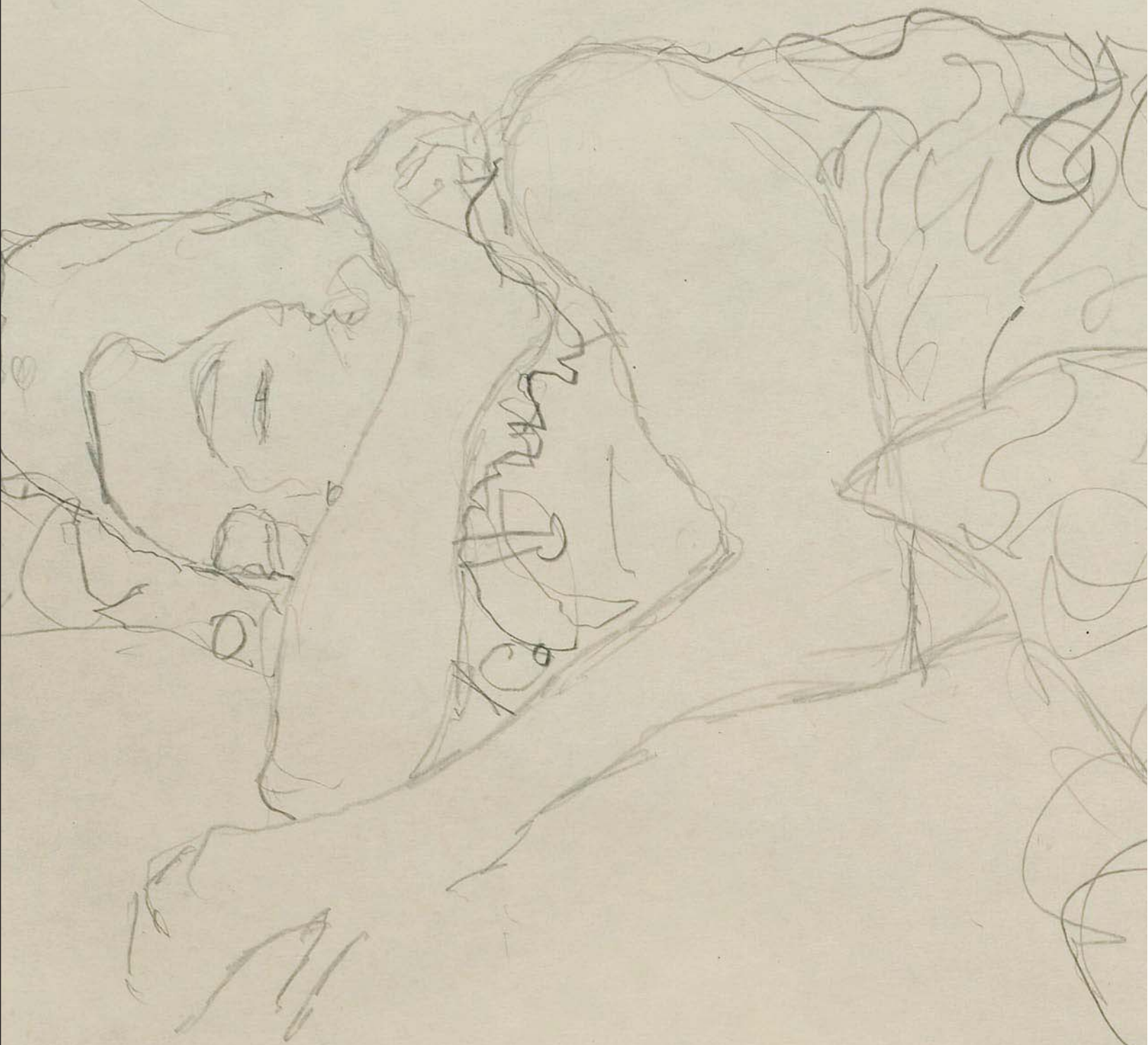




study of a reclining model, dating to around 1914/15, he allows the contours of the bedding, merged with those of the body, to be cropped by the right edge of the sheet, as a result of which the figure appears to flow on as a horizontal continuum.

This drawing is notable for the contrast between the animated linearity within the contours and the pale emptiness of the drawing surface, between positive and negative space. Seemingly by chance (although this is surely the outcome of careful calculation), the forms of the patterned textile overlap the sensually radiant, naked body parts. Here each detail has its unshakable place – be it the perfect circle of the navel or the decoratively dense coils of pubic hair. The focus is established by the eyes opened in a slit-like fashion and aimed directly at the observer. Klimt's particular attraction to this refined type of "cat's eye" is also evident in other drawings.

With his pencil, his medium of choice, Klimt evolves a rich scale of linear differentiations – from the wildly abstract textile patterns to the subtle and often partially repeated outlines in the areas of naked flesh. Between a strict planarity and the lively advance and retreat of implicitly three-dimensional entities there arises a particular formal excitement. Like many erotic drawings of nudes from Klimt's later years, this one appears to be an autonomous work, without any demonstrable connection with a particular painting. ■



13 NUDE WITH BENT LEFT LEG, STUDY FOR "THE BRIDE", c 1917

AKT MIT ANGEWINKELTEM LINKEN BEIN, STUDIE FÜR "DIE BRAUT", UM 1917

Pencil on paper, 565 x 372mm

Inscribed at lower right in black ink: Nachlass meines Brüders Gustav Klimt / Hermine Klimt [Estate of my brother, Gustav Klimt / Hermine Klimt]

Provenance

Private collection, Vienna.

This work will be included in Marian Bisanz-Prakken's Supplement to Alice Strobl's catalogue raisonné of Gustav Klimt's drawings.

Among Klimt's depictions of the female nude an important role is played, above all in the last years of his career, by the rounded body type with its projecting forms. He here continued to pay particular attention to the buttocks – a body part that, in his painting *Goldfish* (1901), had already served as the provocative principal motif. In his last major work, the unfinished painting *The Bride* (1917/18), from the midst of shimmering drapery and fragmentary glimpses of further bodies at the lower left, there gleam out the buttocks and back of a plump female nude. The shoulders and lower face are concealed by a brightly patterned cloth. It would seem that this epitome of fleshly desire was intended to serve as the diametrical opposite of the girlishly slim figure glimpsed, as in a dream, in the right half of the composition.

Klimt arrived at this symbol of female desirability by way of several studies¹, among which the present work can be included. While in the painting itself the legs remain invisible, the model here recorded reclining on her stomach draws up her bent left leg, while the right leg remains fully extended.

¹ Cf. Alice Strobl, *Gustav Klimt. Die Zeichnungen. III: 1912-1918*, Salzburg 1984, nos. 3008-3011; *ibid. IV 1878-1918, Nachtrag*, Salzburg 1989, nos. 3738-3740.



Gustav Klimt, *The Bride*, 1917/18, private collection, on long-term loan to the Belvedere, Vienna

On account of so extreme a pose, the central part of the body is revealed to its full extent, including even the erotic detail of the lightly indicated pubic hair. At the same time the figure conveys – both on account of the emptiness surrounding it and through the way the feet seem to disappear into the air – the impression of a buoyant other-worldliness. In a manner characteristic of the drawing style of his final years, with an alternation of harmoniously flowing lines and fleeting, nervously repeated strokes, Klimt here renders the outlines of both body and face, as also the folds of the drapery thrown around the shoulders. The pulsating rhythm of the advance and retreat of powerfully and tenderly accentuated passages allows the empty areas of flesh both to breathe and sensually to gleam. ■



14 HEAD-AND-SHOULDERS PORTRAIT OF A LADY, 1916/17

BRUSTBILD EINER DAME, 1916/17

Pencil on paper, 569 x 373 mm

PROVENANCE

Leopold Collection, Vienna

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For Klimt, at every stage of his development as a draughtsman, the largely autonomous head-and-shoulders portrait was among his most favoured motifs. It was in particular during the last years of his career that he produced a great diversity of these calm and sovereign renderings, which could hardly differ more from the ecstasy of his erotic sheets. It may be a surprise to many to realise that Klimt, in his last years, was producing drawings of a marked economy of linear concentration alongside those characterised by a dense, wild tangle of lines. A radical example of this "other side", which on occasion recalls the work of Matisse or Picasso, is to be found in the present anonymous portrait of a young woman. As Alice Strobl observed, this model is close in appearance to the similarly anonymous sitter seen in the unfinished *Portrait of a Lady* (1917, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz).

In the present drawing Klimt's treatment of the only seemingly simple lines is by no means uncomplicated. With a thin pencil he initially traces the basic contours of the face, the shoulders and the costume. By this means he plots the subtle spatial tension between the frontally viewed face and the slightly turned upper body with its naked shoulder revealed by the slight slippage of the dress.



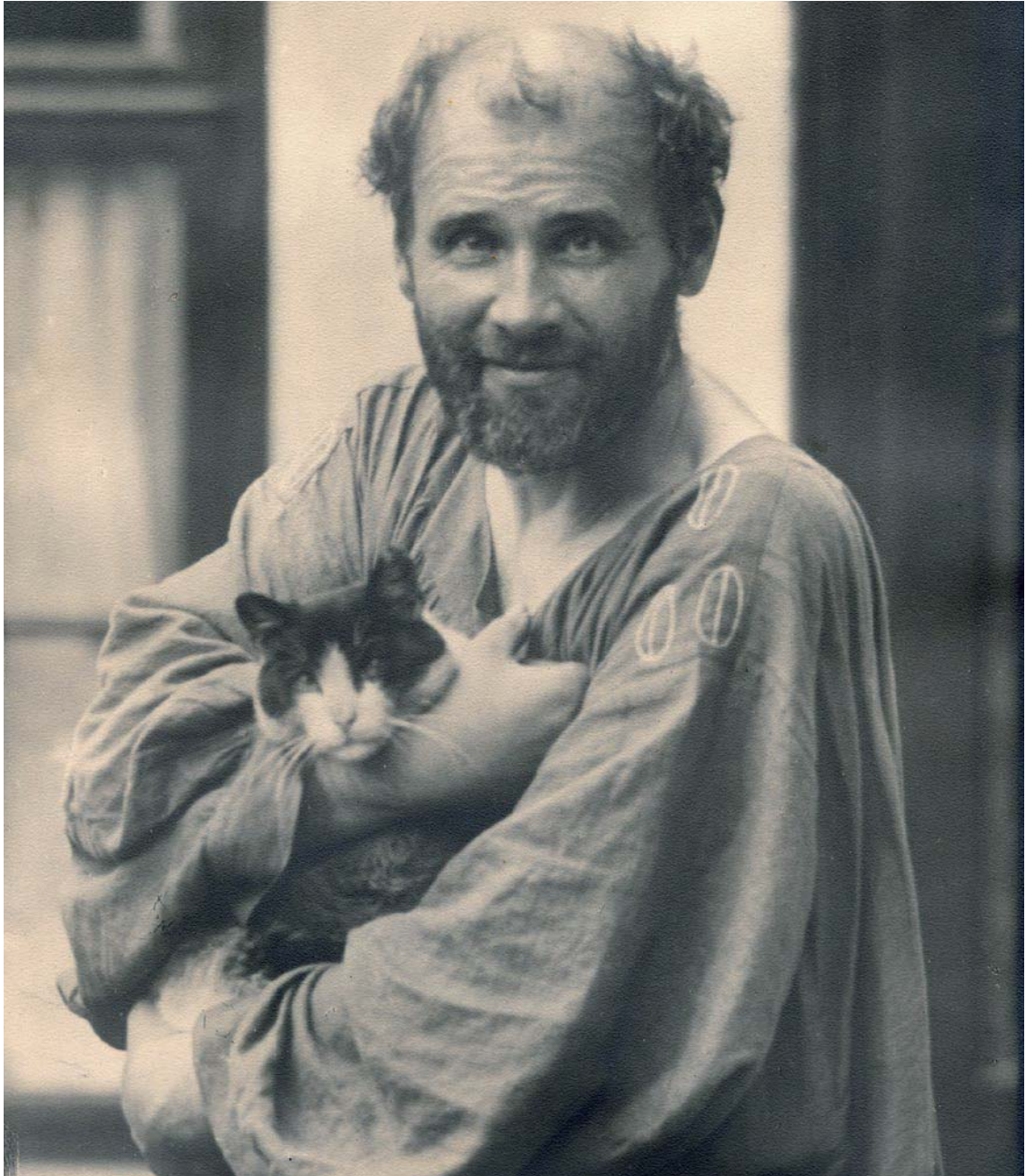


Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of a Woman (unfinished)*, 1917/18, oil on canvas, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz

The delicate linear framework is sensually caressed by a broader, more powerful pencil, giving rise to slight formal discrepancies. The lively shimmer of paler and darker greys is more concentrated in the facial features. The strengthened outlining of the pupils and the corners of the eyes intensify the glassy stare; the gently indicated, slightly open mouth is overlaid by the firmly delineated smiling lips. Klimt reserves his most powerful accents for the striking eyebrows, the shadow along the right temple and, above all, the black neck-band, which is concealed at its centre by the overlapping pale oval of the chin. These dark, angular motifs, together with the cursorily indicated rectangular ornament on the right sleeve, secure the inner balance of the composition.

The purpose of this remarkable work is unknown. But in the mask-like rendering of the face, which corresponds to a particular ideal of female beauty, there is an ambivalence (as in Klimt's early Symbolist works of around 1900) between sensual proximity and mystical distance. A particular role is played here by the radiant glance and the presentation of the mouth, smiling ambiguously and oscillating between light and dark. ■





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