



Victoria Charles & Klaus H. Carl

# THE VIENNESE SECESSION

Art of Century

Victoria Charles  
**The Viennese Secession**

«Parkstone International Publishing»

2016



## **Charles V.**

The Viennese Secession / V. Charles — «Parkstone International Publishing», 2016 — (Art of Century)

ISBN 978-1-78310-394-2

A symbol of modernity, the Viennese Secession was defined by the rebellion of twenty artists who were against the conservative Vienna Künstlerhaus' oppressive influence over the city, the epoch, and the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire. Influenced by Art Nouveau, this movement (created in 1897 by Gustav Klimt, Carl Moll, and Josef Hoffmann) was not an anonymous artistic revolution. Defining itself as a “total art”, without any political or commercial constraint, the Viennese Secession represented the ideological turmoil that affected craftsmen, architects, graphic artists, and designers from this period. Turning away from an established art and immersing themselves in organic, voluptuous, and decorative shapes, these artists opened themselves to an evocative, erotic aesthetic that blatantly offended the bourgeoisie of the time. Painting, sculpture, and architecture are addressed by the authors and highlight the diversity and richness of a movement whose motto proclaimed “for each time its art, for each art its liberty” – a declaration to the innovation and originality of this revolutionary art movement.

ISBN 978-1-78310-394-2

© Charles V., 2016  
© Parkstone International  
Publishing, 2016

## Содержание

Preface	7
Vienna in the Second Half of the 19th Century	11
The World Fair of 1889	15
Art in England at the End of the Century	22
Art on the Continent at the End of the Century	29
The Precursors of the Viennese Secession in Munich and Berlin	30
Munich	31
The Artists of the Munich Secession	40
Berlin	49
Artists of the Berlin Secession	52
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	57

# **Victoria Charles & Klaus H. Carl**

## **The Viennese Secession**

### **With detailed quotations from Hermann Bahr and Ludwig Hevesi**

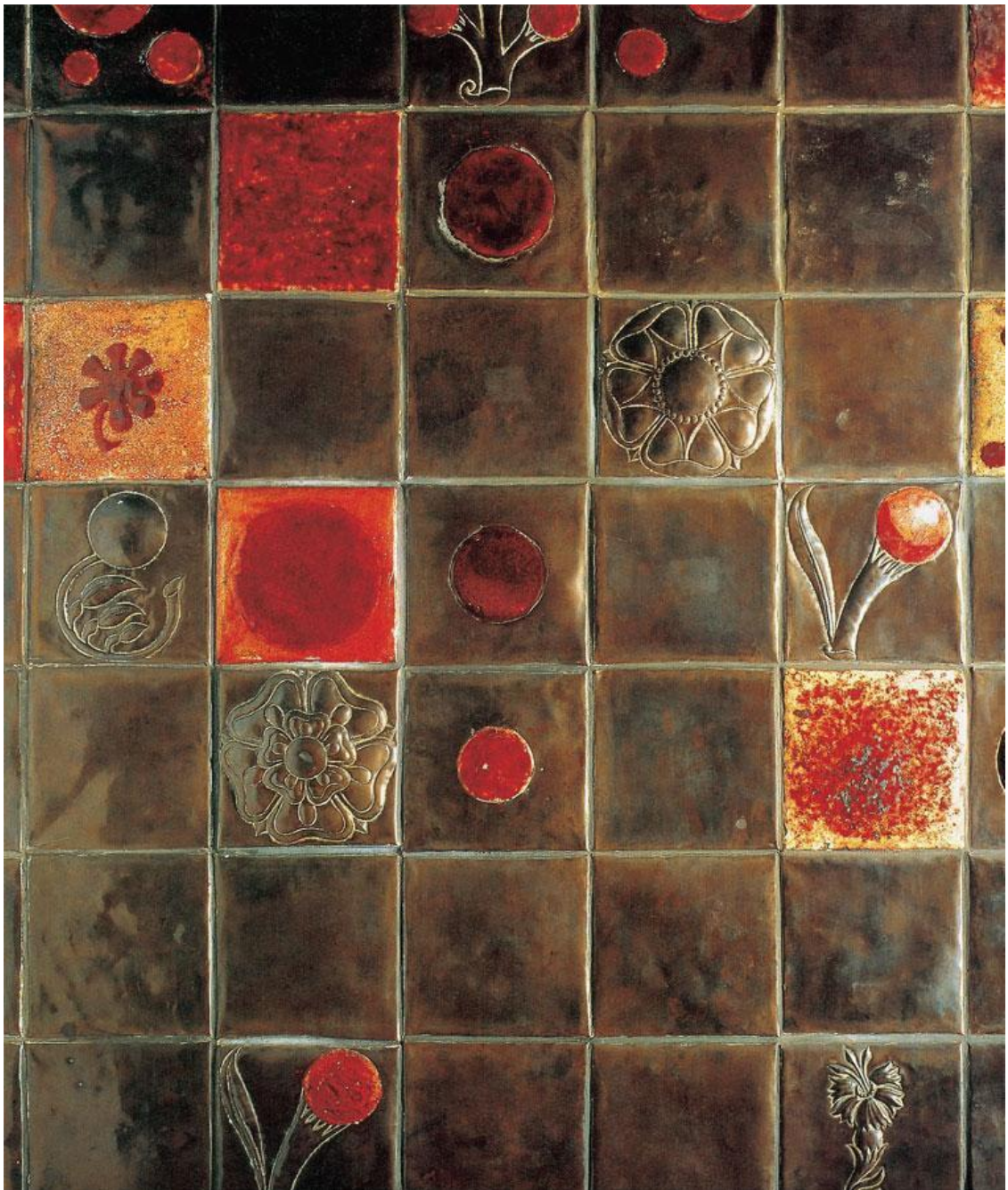


© Confidential Concepts, worldwide, USA  
© Parkstone Press International, New York, USA  
© Charles Robert Ashbee  
© Charles Francis Annesley Voysey

- © Ludwig von Hofmann
- © Bertold Löffler
- © Fritz Lang
- © Eduard Josef Wimmer-Wisgrill
- © Nathan Murrell
- © Henry Van de Velde
- © Victor Horta/Droits SOFAM – Belgique (pp. 173, 174, 175, 176)
- © Hector Guimard (pp. 178, 179)
- © Jürgen Schreier (p. 189)
- © Friedrich König (p. 192)



## Preface



**Charles Robert Ashbee**, Chimneypiece, executed by Arthur Cameron for the Magpie and Stump (Pub), 37 Cheyne Walk, London, 1893.

Plain, repoussé and enamelled copper tiles, 215 × 201.5 cm.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

To write a text on the Viennese Secession – an art movement that, despite its short creative period of barely ten years, had an enormous impact in the development of modern art – without consulting the contemporary witnesses of that period would be a futile venture. For this reason, this book will feature the writing of two contemporaries of the Secession artists, both believable

and competent columnists whose testimonies are as relevant today as they were in the early 20th century. Excerpts from their commentaries have been carefully translated from the variety of German that was used before the Second Orthographical Conference in 1902. The two experts in question are Hermann Bahr and Ludwig Hevesi.

The Austrian Hermann Bahr, born 1863 in Linz, was a poet, outstanding essayist, influential art critic, and expert of contemporary literary movements from naturalism to expressionism, as well as one of the most important comedy authors of his time. Furthermore, he was a spokesman for *Jung-Wien* (Young Vienna), a group of writers and literary critics, who called themselves “Viennese coffeehouse writers” and used *Die Zeit*, a weekly literary magazine owned and published by Hermann Bahr between 1894 and 1904, as a mouthpiece for their ideas. He lived for over twenty years in Berlin, where he mainly worked with theatre manager, director, and actor Max Reinhardt (1873–1943). After two decades in Berlin, he left Germany for Austria to work in Salzburg and Vienna. In 1922, he returned to Germany to settle down in Munich, where he died twelve years later. Beyond his collection of critical essays and his activities as playwright of comedies, he also composed several works of prose and drama. To list every of Bahr’s accomplishments would go far beyond the scope of this preface.

Ludwig Hevesi (1842–1910), born under the name Ludwig Hirsch in the Austro-Hungarian town of Heves, was a journalist and writer. He began his professional career in a Hungarian daily newspaper when he was 24-years-old and was shortly after promoted to report for the arts and culture section of the Viennese *Fremdenblatt*. During the reign of Franz Joseph I (1830–1916), ruler of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hevesi worked especially for the Secession as columnist and art critic. He once wrote:

[...] “Indeed, there is no guidebook to the Secession.” That was my response when a young art enthusiast, confronted with the first success of the new movement, asked me whether there was a book that he could consult to better understand the uncomfortable paradigmatic shift that he was faced with. If someone would put this question forward today, I would recommend the following book [...].

The Viennese Secession was not a singular event that came from nowhere. The movement had precursors and, naturally, also successors, and soon other, younger artists from other associations started rebelling against the rigid predominance of the established and generally rather conservative artists, who confronted all these new ideas for the training and education of artists with an uncompromisingly defensive attitude. Having no chance to exhibit their works together with already recognised artists – their work didn’t usually clear the stage of pre-selection that was supervised by a jury which was evidently composed of these very artists – thus deprived them often of the opportunity to find buyers for their work.

In order to generate a holistic depiction of the Viennese Secession, a brief overview of the most important precursors of the movement is necessary.





**Ditha Moser**, *Folding calendar*, 1907.

Donation from Oswald Oberhuber, Collection and Archive, Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna.





**Gustav Klimt**, *Gnawing Sorrow* (detail from second panel of *The Beethoven Frieze*), 1902.  
Casein on plaster, height: 220 cm.  
Secession, Vienna.

## Vienna in the Second Half of the 19th Century

Even though the Viennese upper class were passionately fond of dances, the opera, theatre, and music, they remained extremely conservative. Strict Catholicism accompanied by rigid social morals made them seem, at least in appearance, unmoving and close-lipped. While the rest of society was only too happy to embrace all sorts of pleasures then deemed sensual, for example the waltz, the so-called “good” society rejected any topic that was unaesthetic, erotic or even mildly sexual. Thus different standards were applied to different strata of society, which is telling about the dominant concept of morality in Vienna in particular, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in general, at the end of the 19th century.

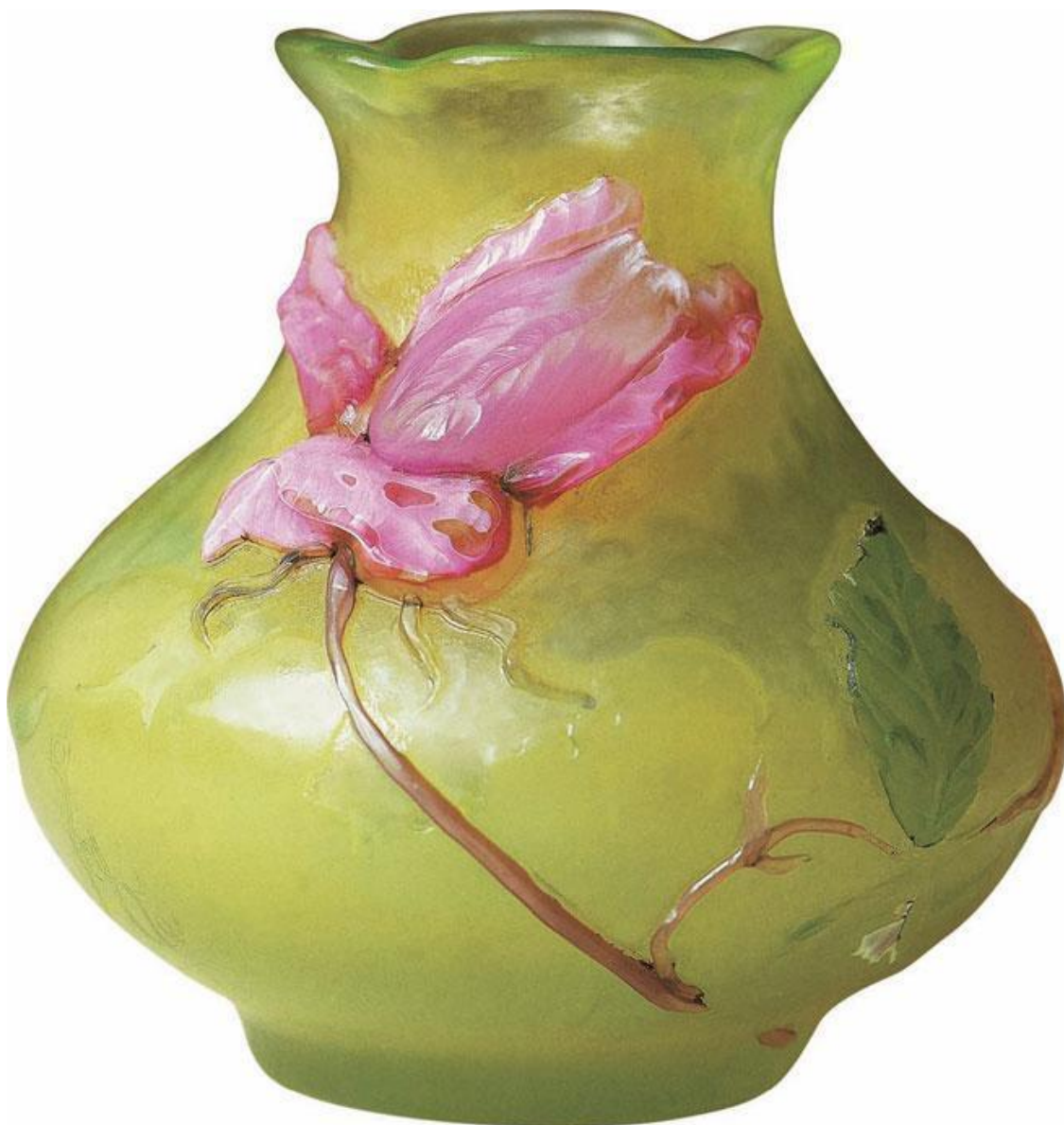
In these decades, Vienna was a city at the zenith of its power and influence. Kaiser Franz Joseph I was the monarch of an empire of over fifty million people, encompassing several dozen constituent kingdoms and duchies from Bohemia to Serbia. However, at the end of World War I, at the beginning of 1918, the empire only had several months of existence left. With Kaiser Karl's failed attempt to conserve the empire in the form of a federal state, Austria suddenly became a small nation of seven million inhabitants, of which three million lived in and around Vienna. Barely twenty years later, Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) would annex the Republic, thus sealing its fate in the tumultuous years to follow.

However, the decline of Austria had begun long before the events of 1918 or 1934. A succession of military defeats were already a clear warning sign that the prolonged existence of the empire was not guaranteed. Furthermore, the rising impoverishment of thousands of Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, Jews, Romanians, and Romani led many to leave the poorest parts of the empire to look for work in the capital. However, their lot did not improve as the city could not provide enough work and accommodation, which led them to live in worse conditions than before. These social problems were ignored by the rich and influential citizens of Vienna who decided to blind and distract themselves with a true flurry of pleasure-filled activities instead.

These developments also influenced the decorative arts, which witnessed a lot of change and upheaval between the decline of the influential French style and the World Fair in Paris in 1889, which was held in honour of the hundredth birthday of the French Revolution. There was no simple and fluid transition from one style to another. Between the rise of new ideas and artistic techniques, older styles were consistently resurrected. Even as late as 1900, artistic influences popularised during the time of the European Restoration, or French art during the reign of Napoleon III (1808–1873), could still be seen in the exhibits of the World Fair. However, the imitation of these styles was not consistent enough for a coherent movement to form, mainly because there were many artists who wanted to distinguish themselves from their predecessors by expressing their own decorative ideals.

Despite their novelty, these new movements were not isolated from the influences of their predecessors. They were characterised by weariness from seeing the old forms and patterns repeated over and over again, from having to face the infinite imitation of furniture from the time of the French kings that all answered to the name of “Louis”, beginning with Louis XIII (1601–1643), followed by Louis XIV (1643–1715) to Louis XVI (1754–1793). They also were characterised by a general dismissal of the common shapes and pattern of the Gothic style and the Renaissance. In essence, this new movement stood for the acceptance of a new art that was grounded in the modern age and not dependant on previous influences for credibility.





**Émile Gallé**, *Orchid Vase*.  
Glass with inserted ornaments and relief.  
Private collection.



**Louis Comfort Tiffany**, *Fluted Flower-Form Vase*, between 1900 and 1905.  
Lead glass.

Before 1789, the year that marked the end of the *Ancien Régime*, different styles usually developed with dependence on the monarchs; this new century wanted its own style. The desire for freedom from art and fashion dictated by rulers and sovereigns was not only perceivable in France but also beyond its borders. Many countries in Europe witnessed the slow awakening of proud nationalism that was rooted in the wish for literature and art that could be called their own. In short, this desire created an emergence of new understanding and appreciation of art that was not a servile copy of past glory and even less an imitation of foreign influences. In addition, contrary to previous decades, the need for applied art skyrocketed, mainly because this branch of art had nearly died out in the 19th century. In the past, everything was richly decorated: from home décor and dresses to weapons and simple household objects. Every object possessed its own ornaments and its own beauty and elegance. The 19th century, on the other hand, essentially looked for functionality rather than elegance. Beauty, elegance and ornaments became superfluous. This century, which began with a totalitarian indifference towards decorative beauty and elegance and ended so sadly in the brutal disregard of international human rights, was characterised by a paralysis of taste and aesthetics.

The return of the exiled concept of aesthetics was also at the heart of the Art Nouveau movement and its Austro-German manifestation, the *Jugendstil*. In France, people began to feel the absurdity of the situation and started to demand creativity, innovation and authenticity from cabinetmakers, decorators, stucco specialists, and even architects. This gave rise to a form of applied art that directly catered to the need of a new generation.



## The World Fair of 1889

The multiple artistic trends that would lay the foundation for a new holistic style of art should manifest themselves on the Paris World Fair of 1889 first. The English exhibitors showcased their very own taste in furniture. The American silversmiths Graham and Augustus Tiffany decorated the products of their workshops with fascinating new ornaments while Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) showed the products of his revolutionary technique for the creation of stained glass.

An elite group of French artists exhibited individual pieces that also marked a progress in the spreading of the popularity of applied art in France. Émile Gallé (1846–1904) put furniture and coloured vases of his own design on display while Clément Massier (1845–1917), Albert Damousse (1848–1926), and Auguste Delaherche (1857–1940) could convince the visitors of the world fair with mottled earthenware in hitherto rarely used brilliant colours and daring shapes. Henri Vever (1875–1932), The House of Boucheron, and Lucien Falize (1839–1897) presented intricately designed jewellery and silverware. The new trend towards elegant and capillary-thin ornaments was technically advanced to such a high degree that Falize even presented commonplace silverware with complex herbal designs.

The new ideas that were presented at the World Fair soon blossomed: everyone pushed towards a revolution in art. They sought liberation from the ideals and prejudice of the so-called ‘exalted’ art, and thus artists all over Europe began searching for new forms of artistic expression. In 1891, the *Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts* created a new department for applied art, which was initially not held in very high esteem but at least managed to participate in the *Salon* with pewterware by Jules Desbois (1851–1935), Alexandre Charpentier (1856–1909), and Jean Baffier (1851–1920). In 1895, the rising popularity of applied art forced the *Société des Artistes Français* to accept the creation of a department solely dedicated to this newly revived branch for the annual *Salon* exhibitions. Later that year, the Hamburg-born Siegfried Bing (1838–1905), after returning from an assignment in the United States, opened a shop which he called “Art Nouveau”.



**Henri Vever**, *Vase with Crickets*.

Bronze and enamelled silver.

Exhibited in the Salon of the National Society of Fine Arts in 1904 in Paris. Robert Zehil collection.

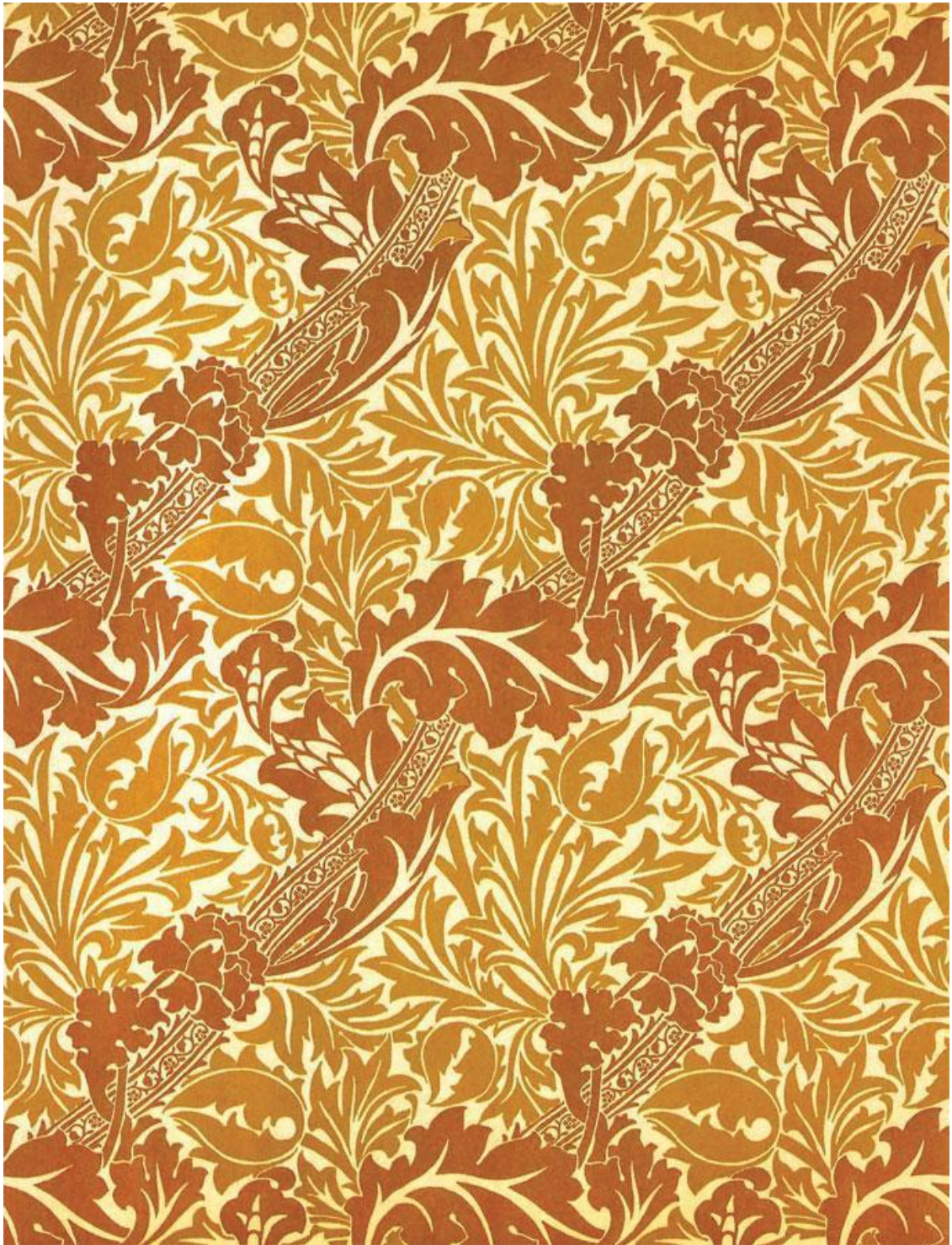


**Edward Burne-Jones** and **Kate Faulkner** (design) and **John Broadwood** (production), *Grand piano*, 1883.

Oak, stained and decorated with gold and silver-gilt gesso, 266 × 140.5 × 45.7 cm.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.





**William Morris, *Tapestry*.**





**Émile Gallé**, *Vitrine with Artistic Vases*.  
Marquetry and glass.  
Macklowe Gallery, New York.





**Eugène Grasset**, *Salon des cent*, 1894.  
Print for a colour poster.  
Victor and Gretha Arwas collection.





**Walter Crane**, *Swans*, wallpaper design, 1875.  
Gouache and watercolour, 53.1 × 53 cm.  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

## Art in England at the End of the Century

The rise of Art Nouveau was no less remarkable in other countries. In England, the popularity of venues such as the Liberty & Co. Department Store, the Merton-Abbey Workshops, and the Kelmscott-Press, which was managed by William Morris (1834–1896) and supplied with designs and ideas by the two painters Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898) and Walter Crane (1845–1915), rose steadily. This trend even reached London's "Grand Bazaar", Maple & Co., where the customers were offered Art Nouveau while the house designs fell more and more out of favour.

The main representatives of this new movement of applied art were, already mentioned, William Morris and John Ruskin (1819–1900). John Ruskin – more of a predecessor to the Arts and Crafts Movement – was well known for being a staunch believer in art and beauty, almost to such a degree that his concept of art began resembling a religion on its own. Similarly, Morris was not simply an artisan but also a true artist and poet. His wallpapers and fabrics revolutionised home décor and their success enabled him to build a factory dedicated to the production of these products. Beside his artistic efforts he was also a politically active member of several socialist movements and parties.

Ruskin and Morris were, of course, not the only leading figures of the movement. There was also the architect Philip Speakman Webb (1831–1915) and the painter Walter Crane, who could rightfully be called the most creative interior decorator of his time, possessed as he was with an impeccable sense of elegance. They were a beacon for a whole generation of outstanding architects, designers, decorators and illustrators who flocked to their banner to realise their dreams of a new art together. Their artistic prowess is beyond comparison: like in a pantheistic dream they composed a fragile melody of ornaments that fused flora and fauna into a transcendent whole. This ornament-based art, with its filigreed patterns and arabesques, was reminiscent of the exuberant ornament-artists of the Renaissance. Not by accident either. The English artists intricately studied the elaborate engraving techniques – which today are rather under-appreciated – from the 15th and 16th centuries. In a similar manner they studied the wood, copper and niello artwork of their contemporaries from the Munich school.

Despite using the art of the past as direct inspiration, the designers of the English Art Nouveau never copied it reverently, afraid of creating something new; quite the opposite, they enriched this art with the pure joy of new creation. One simply has to skim through old editions of *The Studio Magazine*, *The Artist*, or *The Magazine of Art*<sup>1</sup> and marvel at the designs for decorative book covers and various other ornamented media in order to see the immense creativity that animated the movement. It is quite fascinating to see how much young talent – among these talented artists were also quite a few girls and women – was unearthed in the art competitions that were organised by *The Studio* or South Kensington.<sup>2</sup> The new prints, fabrics and wallpapers which changed the traditional way of home décor, created by Crane, Morris and designer Charles Voysey (1857–1941), might have been inspired by patterns seen in nature itself but it also referenced the traditional Oriental and European principles of ornament taught by authentic decorators of the past.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Studio, The Magazine of Art, and L'Artiste were art magazines that were published in Paris and London. This form of publication had its zenith in the late 19th century, when public interest for applied art was at its highest. Arts et décoration (1897), first published in Paris, is another magazine from this tradition.

<sup>2</sup> South Kensington was a name commonly used for the Royal College of Art.



**William Morris or Edward Burne-Jones**, *Light and Darkness, Night and Day* (detail from *The Creation*), 1861.

Stained glass window.

All Saints Church, Selsley, Gloucestershire.





**William Morris** or **Edward Burne-Jones**, *Heaven, Earth and Water* (detail from *The Creation*), 1861.

Stained glass window.

All Saints Church, Selsley, Gloucestershire.

The architecture in England was clearly dominated by the formal classicism based on Greek, Roman, and Italian models. With the Arts and Crafts movement, England finally rebelled against this conformism and rejuvenated English art. At the frontlines of this revolution were, first, architects like Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–1852) who participated in creating the design of the Houses of Parliament and, later, a group of Pre-Raphaelite artists, who preferred their contemporary art more than the art of the 16th century and the classicism that was so foreign to the English tradition.

Architects were also responsible for reviving old English art by applying the simple, elegant workmanship of 16th and 17th century English architecture from the times of Queen Anne (1665–1714) to contemporary tastes. Old English art was not the only source of inspiration they sought. Given the similarity in climate, manners, and a certain degree of ethnic cousinship, it was only natural for them to use North European influences as well. From the colourful architecture of Flanders to the red brick buildings of Frisia, Denmark, and the north of Germany, they were given a multitude of inspiration.

The majority of these architects did not feel diminished to also work as interior decorators. Quite the opposite – they could not imagine it any other way. How else could it be possible to achieve perfect harmony between the outside and the inside of a house? In the interior they sought

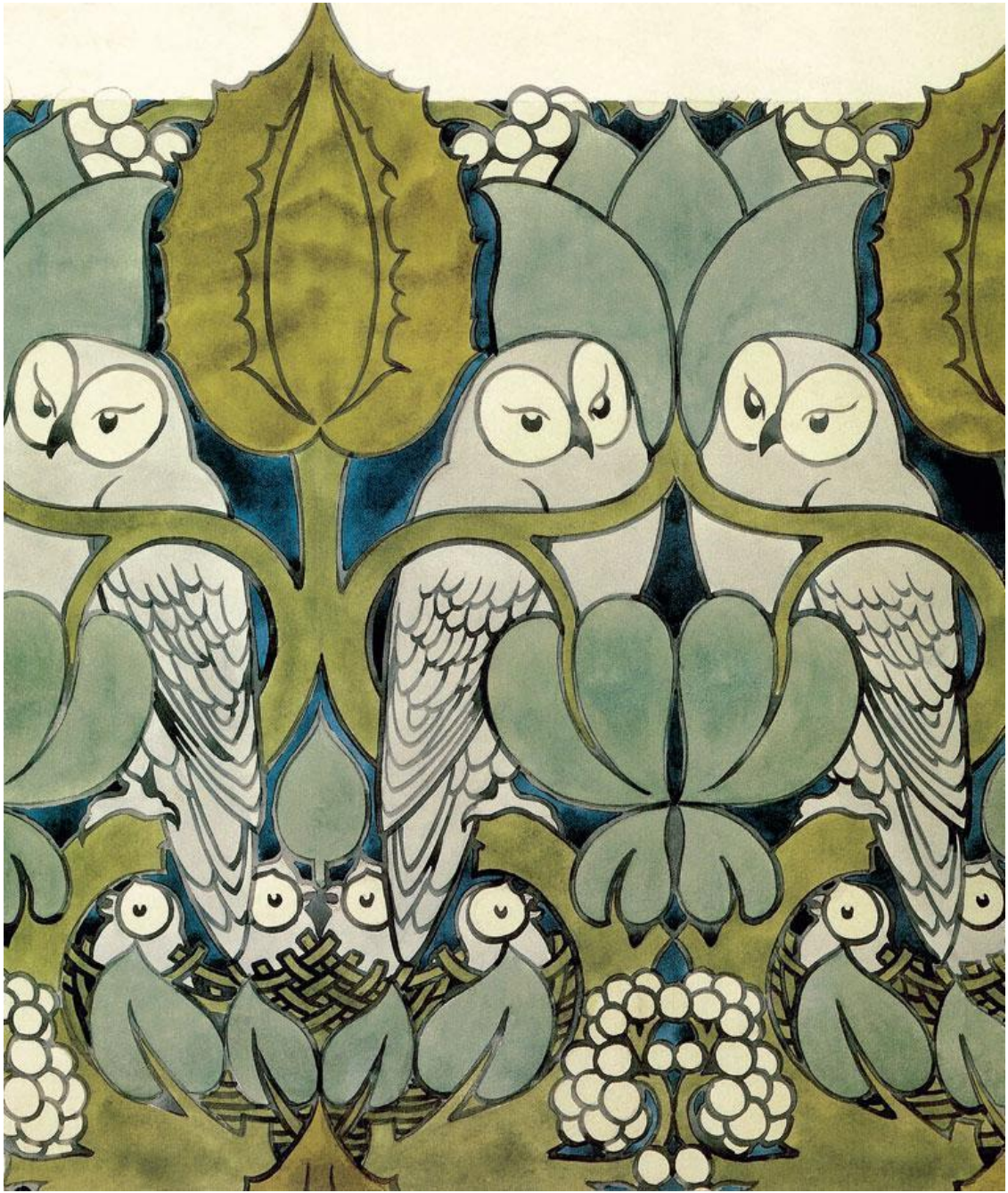
the same harmony that was apparent on the outside. With tapestries and furniture they composed an ensemble of shapes, patterns, and muted colours in which every single component was perfectly attuned to each other.<sup>3</sup>

Among the most notable architects were Richard Norman Shaw (1831–1912), Thomas Edward Collcutt (1840–1924), the members of Ernest George's (1839–1922) office and Harold Ainsworth Peto (1854–1933). They brought back a notion that was missing in the movement: the subordination of all art under architecture. Without this idea it is impossible to develop a distinctive style. We have to thank them for the re-introduction of pastel-décor (from the 18th century), the re-discovery of architectonic ceramics (from the ancient Orient) and finally for brightening the predominantly grey- and brown-shaded colour palette with sea-green or peacock-blue.

The reformation of architecture and applied art in England was only a national phenomenon at first. It might not be immediately apparent in the work of William Morris but his main passion was English art and history. This passion resulted in a return to colours, shapes and patterns which no longer originated from Greek, Roman, or Italian art, therefore constituting a truly English and no longer classical art. Beside wallpapers and tapestries, England now had distinctively individual furniture which was new and modern; the interiors of its houses showcased the decorative composites and colours of the new movement.

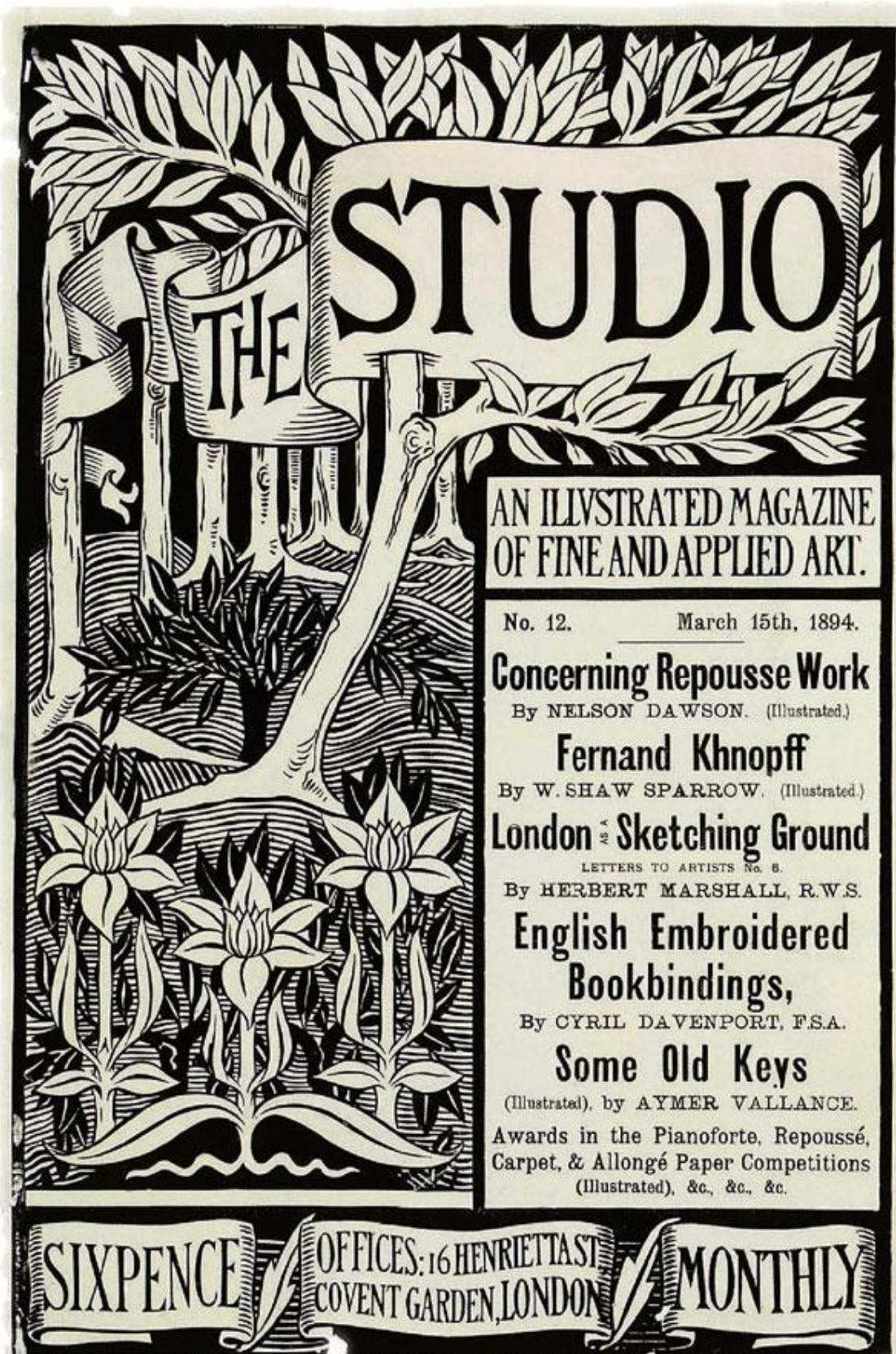
---

<sup>3</sup> *This school of architecture that originated in the principles of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) defined the architect as a type of project leader who was responsible for the harmonic mesh of construction, decoration and interior decoration.*



**Charles Francis Annesley Voysey**, Design for *Owl* Wallpaper and Fabric, c. 1897.  
Crayon and watercolour, 50.8 × 40 cm.  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.





Aubrey Beardsley, Poster for *The Studio*, 1893.  
Engraving. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.





**Aubrey Beardsley**, *The Toilet of Salome*, drawing from Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, 1893.  
Line block print, ink on paper.  
Private collection.

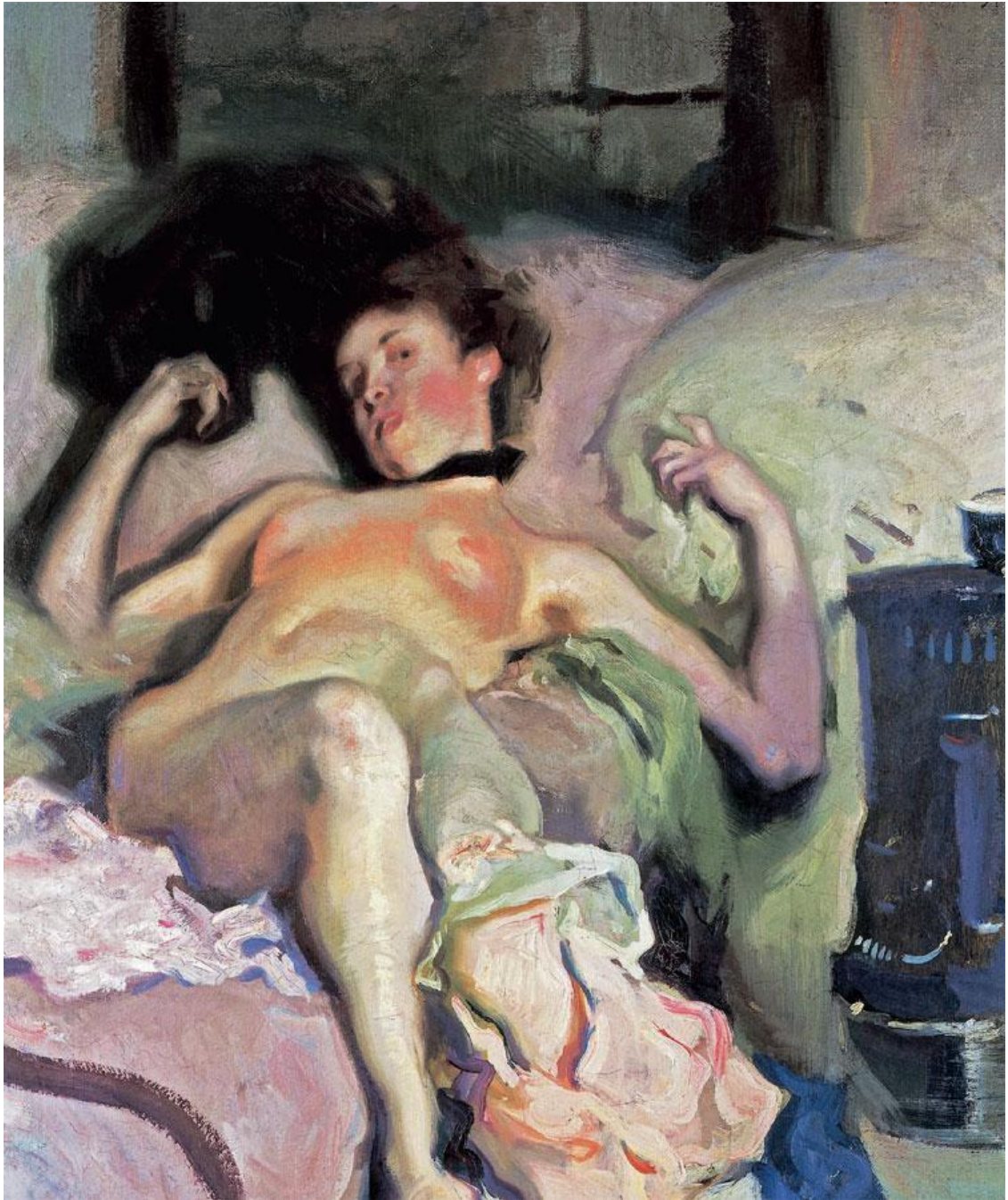
## Art on the Continent at the End of the Century

The movement did not remain exclusively in England. Soon, an exhibition, held in Brussels by the artistic society *La Libre Esthétique* in 1894, dedicated several rooms to decorative art. Later that year, the *Maison d'Art* Gallery, located in the former residence of famous Belgian lawyer and writer Edmond Picard (1836–1924), opened its doors to the public and showcased decorative art from all over Europe that was not only from the workshops of celebrated artists but also featured the artwork of relatively unknown artisans. Roughly at the same time, various groups of artists started to gather in other countries such as Germany, Denmark, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Netherlands.

The terms Art Nouveau and *Jugendstil* quickly became part of the contemporary vocabulary, but were at first not descriptive of any specific style or movement. Although most Secession-like movements came into being more or less simultaneously, with all of them revolting against the academic and established style in common, their social and artistic development still followed different paths, depending on the predominant taste and mentality in their cities or countries.



## The Precursors of the Viennese Secession in Munich and Berlin



**Hugo von Habermann**, *Reclining Nude*, 1907.

Oil on canvas, 100.5 × 83 cm.

Bavarian State Painting Collection, Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

## Munich

Until the 1860s, the Munich style of painting closely followed the ideal of the Viennese folk-inspired painting. The artists from Munich painted picturesque landscapes, farm scenes with livestock, magnificent horses, as well as epic battles, and thus also adopted the sympathetic yet slightly naïve perception of reality inherent to the Viennese style. Maybe the Munich painters were missing the certain pragmatic cosmopolitanism that the Viennese artists at least knew how to emulate, since their school of painting could present a wide range of influences, from the Dutch school of landscape painters to, later, the Barbizon school.

Strangely, this period of painting in Munich is closely connected to one of the most formal artists that ever practiced their art in the city, but yet was able to introduce the theatre-like elegance of the history- and costume-painting of Paul Delaroche (1797–1859) and, a contemporary of Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) and Jean Augustus Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), Carl Theodor von Piloty (1826–1886). Today almost but forgotten, Piloty became the most important historic painter of his time and was ennobled because of his work in 1860. The titles of his paintings, for example, *Seni Standing Before the Corpse of Wallenstein* (1859), *Nero on the Ruins of the Burning Rome* (1860), *Assassination of Caesar* (1865), *Thusnelda in the Triumphal Procession of Germanicus* (1869/1873), characterise the nature and subject of his style of painting. Unfortunately however, his paintings rarely went deeper than the surface, from a psychological point of view. After his initial successes, Piloty and his paintings quickly fell into obscurity. Interestingly it is not his art that positively influenced later artists but rather the lessons he imparted to his pupils as a teacher.

Among his students, two developed two distinctive and vastly different styles, and thus mark the extreme opposites of Piloty's legacy. Wilhelm Leibl (1844–1900) was a hugely talented artist with a keen instinct for the representation of reality as well as gifted with the ability to portray psychological depth in his paintings, while Franz von Lenbach (1836–1904) focused on naturalistic landscapes, paintings with an architectural emphasis, and studies of people, like the Italian peasant portrayed in *The Young Sheperd* (1860). Essentially he continued in the same vein of painting as Piloty. During a journey through Spain, Lenbach came to the conclusion that it was impossible to surpass the old masters and that it would be best to continuously make use of their insights. Consequently, Lenbach pushed his talent toward the portrait. Most of his portraits thus bear more than a passing resemblance to those of Diego Velázquez (1599–1660). His superficial mastery was met with success and he quickly found a lot of imitators and admirers. This popularity led some artists to assume the same tenet that Lenbach had found for himself: seeing the purpose and pinnacle of art as an imitation of the old masters, as well as abandoning any interest in contemporary art to such a degree that they even regarded it as “inartistic”.

Despite his counter-creative approach to art, Lenbach was a capable artist who had the remarkable skill of capturing the intimate nature of the mode in the portrait, which makes his achievements worth of note. Especially, since he had the opportunity to paint the portraits of several major personalities of his time, such as Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898), Helmuth Graf von Moltke (1848–1916), Kaiser Wilhelm I (1797–1888), as well as other statesmen.





**Max Liebermann**, *Potato Harvester in the Dunes of Zandvoort*, 1895.

Oil on canvas, 75 × 105 cm.

On loan from the Paintings and Sculpture Collection of Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg.



**Bruno Piglhein**, *Ruhe auf der Flucht nach Ägypten (Rest on the Flight to Egypt)*, 1890.



Oil on canvas, 146.3 × 220.5 cm.  
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.



**Bruno Piglhein**, *Die Blinde im Mohnenfeld* (*The Blind Woman in a Poppy Field*), 1889.  
Oil on canvas, 93.5 × 140 cm.  
Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, Kassel.

At the end of the 19th century, Munich was undeniably the German capital of art. More artists lived in Munich than in Vienna and Berlin combined. The majority of these artists were members of one of the three big associations of that time: the *Kunstlergesellschaft Allotria* (Allotria Artists' Association), *Künstler-Sänger-Verein* (Association of Artists and Singers), or the *Gesellige Vereinigung der Münchner Künstlergenossenschaft* (Convivial Union of Associated Artists in Munich). Including their families, these groups counted so many members that it became impossible to organise festivities together as they had done in the past; especially at times like carnival or the famous anniversaries, each association organised its own, which normally had country-wide fame. Similarly, several female artists banded together in an association called *Künstlerinnenverein* (Association of Female Artists) that lasted from 1882 to 1967.

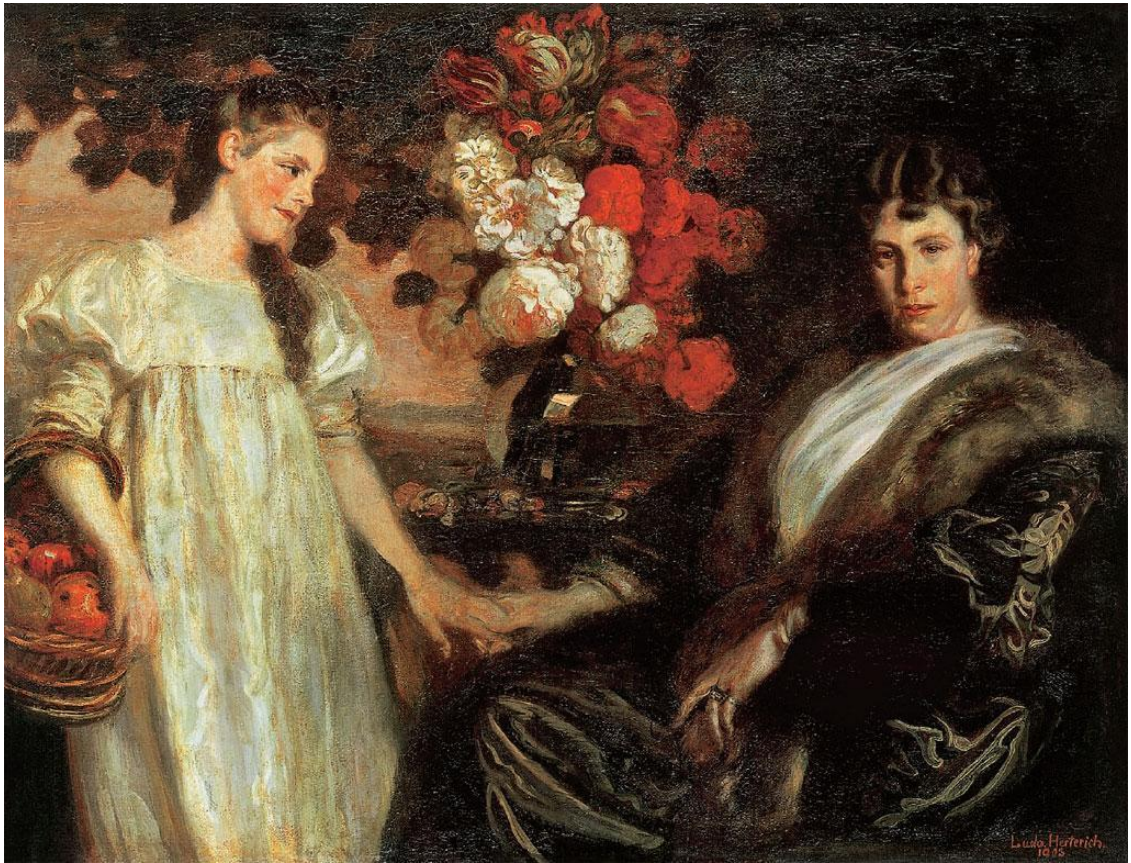
Although Franz von Lenbach was the unofficial and uncrowned “king of artists” in Munich and his art dominated the general understanding of art, it was only a pseudo-rule as the differences between the associations were never more apparent, the polemics never more excessive and passionate and the competition never stronger than during those years. This development simply had to culminate in an incisive reorganisation in the form of a secession from the general *Münchner Künstlergenossenschaft* (Association of Munich's Artists). The result was the *Münchner Secession*, which was founded in 1892.

This reorganisation didn't limit itself, as we will see later, to the fine arts, but also spread to music, literature, and architecture, finally evolving into a full-blown cultural revolution that spilled over into all of Europe.



**Lovis Corinth**, *Inntal-Landschaft (Landscape from the Inn Valley)*, 1910.  
Oil on canvas, 75 × 99 cm.  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.





**Ludwig von Herterich**, *Wife and Daughter of the Architect Max Littmann*, 1903.  
Oil on canvas, 120.7 × 157.3 cm.  
Bavarian State Painting Collection, Neue Pinakothek, Munich.





**Ludwig von Herterich**, *Summer Evening*, c. 1895.

Oil on canvas, 112 × 85 cm.

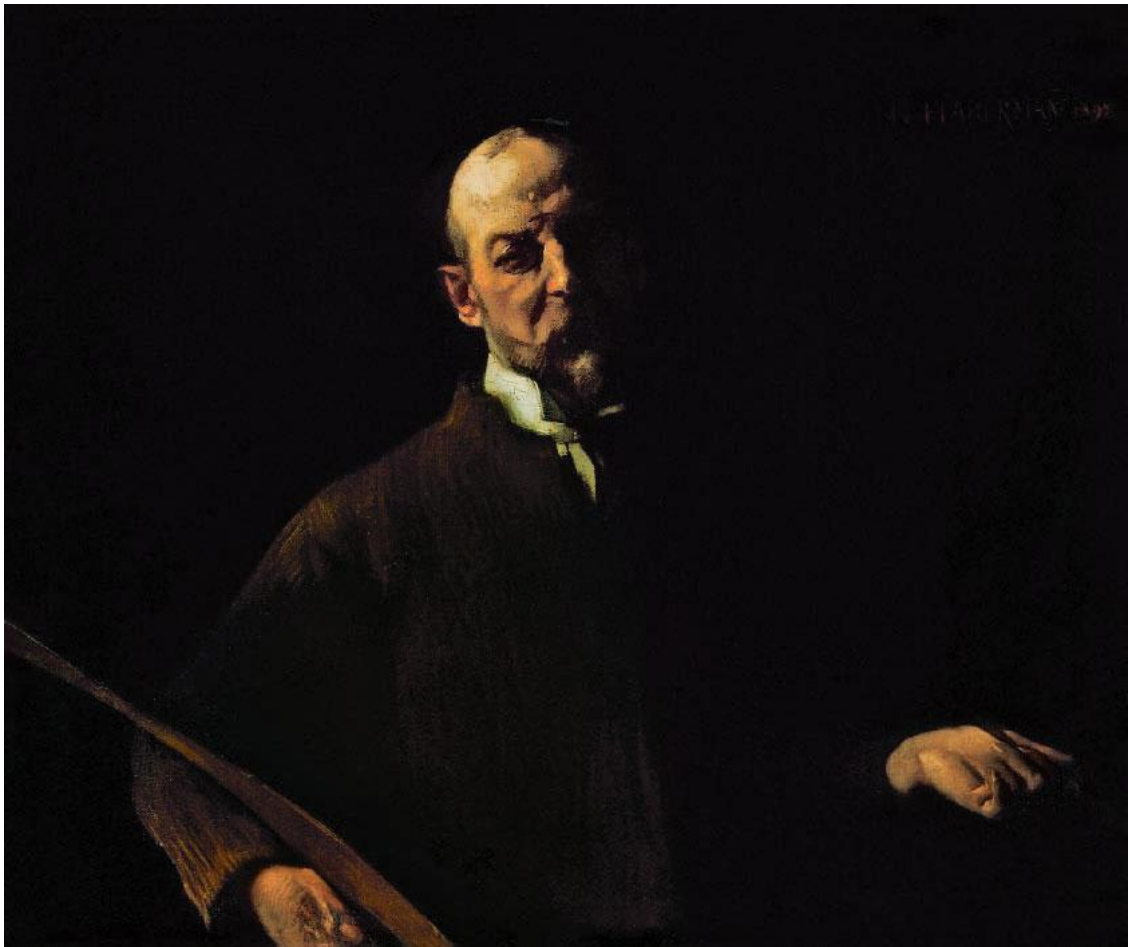
Bavarian State Painting Collection, Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

Secessionist groups formed in several major cities in Germany such as Berlin, Darmstadt and Dresden. Finally the Secession also reached Vienna, where a group was founded in 1897. The art historian Hermann Uhde-Bernays, (1875–1965) noted: “The core of the argument was about

novelty: a new art, new theatre, new opera, new concerts in new concert halls; it was about a rejuvenation of old schools, about a new and fresh life [...].”

However, it was not only the difference in artistic conception that led to the argument. At the same time it was a struggle for power, influence and economic advantages; a struggle that also led to Secession-like movements in the USA and Japan. Despite all differences, the Munich artists agreed on one issue: the necessity of a shared artistic house, like the *Paint-Box* in Düsseldorf that was built several decades prior, in 1848.

Since the artists could not finance such a project – the creation of a monumental and representative temple of art – on their own, they had to find solvent sponsors. With the help of Franz von Lenbach, who already had wealthy clientele, architect Gabriel von Seidl (1848–1913) and painter Otto Seitz (1846–1912), the direly needed funding could be accumulated.



**Hugo von Habermann**, *Self-portrait with Palette*, 1893.

Oil on canvas, 91 × 109 cm.

Permanent loan from the Munich Secession, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.

The most important role in the construction of the building, however, was held by the publisher of *Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten* and well-known patron of the arts, Georg Hirth (1841–1916). Most likely it was his influence that made the municipality of Munich provide a building plot in the centre of the city, in the prestigious Kreuzviertel. The cornerstone for the building was laid on the 3 July 1893 and the construction of the Neo-Renaissance building began shortly afterwards. In 1900, seven years later, the building was inaugurated by the Prince Regent of Bavaria, Luitpold (1821–1912), who was an art enthusiast himself. Having a reputation for being a progressive thinker, from 1903 onwards he also allowed women to study at Bavarian universities.



It was Berlin, however, that “won the race” for the first Secession exhibition in Germany; an accomplishment that the city of Frankfurt, always having been a city of the arts, would have liked to achieve. Nevertheless, it was Munich that was the navel of the German art world for now. The exhibitions attracted several well-known artists: Paul Klee came to Munich in October of 1900 from Switzerland, Wassily Kandinsky travelled from Moscow to Munich to attend the classes held by Franz von Stuck, while Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso also came to express their enthusiasm for the movement and its exhibitions.



**Franz von Stuck**, *Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse and the Rhine*, 1907.  
Oil on wood, 123 × 103 cm.  
Hessian House Foundation, Schlossmuseum, Darmstadt.





**Franz von Stuck**, *The Guardian of Paradise*, 1889.

Oil on canvas.

Museum Villa Stuck, Munich.

## The Artists of the Munich Secession

The most important members of the Secession were, to mention a few, the first president of the movement, painter and sculptor Bruno Piglhein (1848–1894), as well as the painter, art-pedagogue, and teacher Ludwig von Herterich (1856–1932), who ultimately could never satisfy the high hopes that he had raised with his paintings *Johanna Stegen* and *Ulrich von Hutten*.

Franz von Stuck, one of the three “princes of painting of Munich”, a title he shared with Franz von Lenbach and Friedrich August von Kaulbach (1850–1920), was also a part of the group. Earlier, he made a name for himself as a gifted sculptor – which rightfully earned him the honour to be called one of the brightest and most talented artists that Munich could offer. Inspired by the opulent brutality of the baroque painters, by Arnold Böcklin’s (1827–1901) usage of intense colours, and by the rigid beauty of ancient sculptures, he developed his very own style of painting. Highly adaptable, he could apply his style strictly or freely to whatever motive he was painting: fantastical scenes, portraits, landscapes, or still-lives. The grandeur of his style shows itself best in paintings such as *Fangspiel (Faun und Nymphe)* (*Game of Tag – Faun and Nymph*) (c. 1904), *Kampf um eine Frau (Fight over a Woman)* (1905), or *Salome* (1906).

Fritz von Uhde, who was the pioneer and trailblazer of the idea of plein air-painting in Munich, was also part of the group. Initially he was more famous for the controversial discussion that he regularly caused with his deeply emotional paintings that propagated a social interpretation of Christianity. Later he caught the attention of Munich’s art scene with his masterful solutions for technical composition problems in paintings. Since he approached the problems with a truly religious sentiment, the products were equal parts impressive and sentimental: *Let the Children Come to Me* (1884), *Christ with the Peasants* (1886), *The Last Supper* (1886) and *Holy Night* (1889). Beyond that, he also painted in a way that proved he possessed a keen gift for the observation of nature and the reality around him. Some apt examples are *Bavarian Drummers* (1883), *The Nursery* (1889), *The Picture-Book* (1889), and *Darning* (1890). Since Fritz von Uhde was also exhibiting with the Viennese Secession, Ludwig Hevesi reviewed his work as well:

Fritz von Uhde will also be among the celebrated. His grand *Last Supper* – which is preceded by its reputation from Munich – is one of his main, no, maybe his strongest achievement yet. [...] In any case it is the most important of the master. Uhde returns to the light air of poetry from his beginnings, to those grave yet unspoken emotions which create an impression of the taboo. From this subtle poetry of the imponderable he moves towards tangible greatness [...].

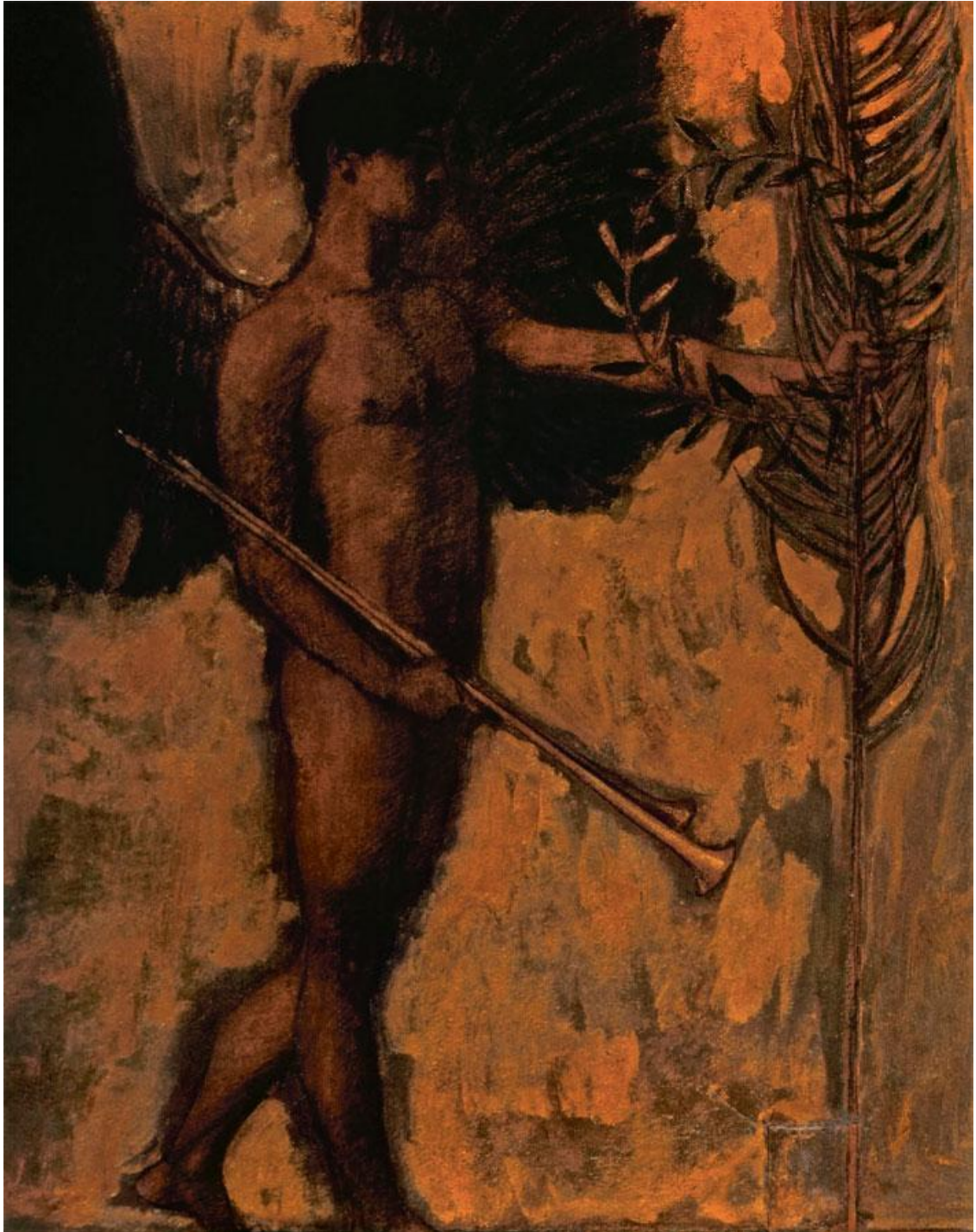
In later years, Uhde got tempted by the example of other artists to start using larger formats for his paintings. At the end of his life, Uhde was creating the most vivid and artistic paintings of his career. Interior scenes and landscapes that showed that he continuously evolved in his style and had finally reached the pinnacle of his mastery of painting. Rightfully he can be called one of the most important artists of the early 20th century.

Other artists that should be mentioned in this enumeration are painter Hans Thoma (1839–1924), Lovis Corinth (1858–1925), the Berlin impressionist Max Liebermann (1847–1935) and Hugo von Habermann (1849–1929), first vice-president, then president of the Secession. Some artists from Berlin joined the Secession in Munich as well, among others, portraitist Reinhold Lepsius, (1857–1922), Max Kruse, husband of the “Queen of Dolls”<sup>4</sup> Käthe Kruse (1854–1942), as well as Walter Leistikow (1865–1908), who later would create the *Berliner Secession*.

---

<sup>4</sup> A name she earned for her extraordinary skill at making dolls.

Yet, this group could not fulfil all expectations and did not remain a united body. They split into smaller groups several times, the most prominent being the *Neue Secession* from 1913. The Secession in Munich was dissolved in 1938 by the National Socialists during one of their “cultural cleansings”.



**Franz von Stuck**, Poster draft for the First International Exhibition of Art, “Homage to painting”, at the *Glaspalast* (detail), 1899.

Mixed technique on cardboard.

Museum Villa Stuck, Munich.





**Franz von Stuck**, *The Sin*, 1893.  
Oil on canvas, 95 × 60 cm.  
Neue Pinakothek, Munich.





**Fritz von Uhde**, *Ascension* (drawing), 1897.

Oil on canvas, 94.6 × 62.8 cm.

Bavarian State Painting Collection, Neue Pinakothek, Munich.





**Fritz von Uhde**, *Woman, Why Weepest Thou?* c. 1880.

Oil on canvas, 108.6 × 80.3 cm.

Charles and Emma Frye Collection, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington.



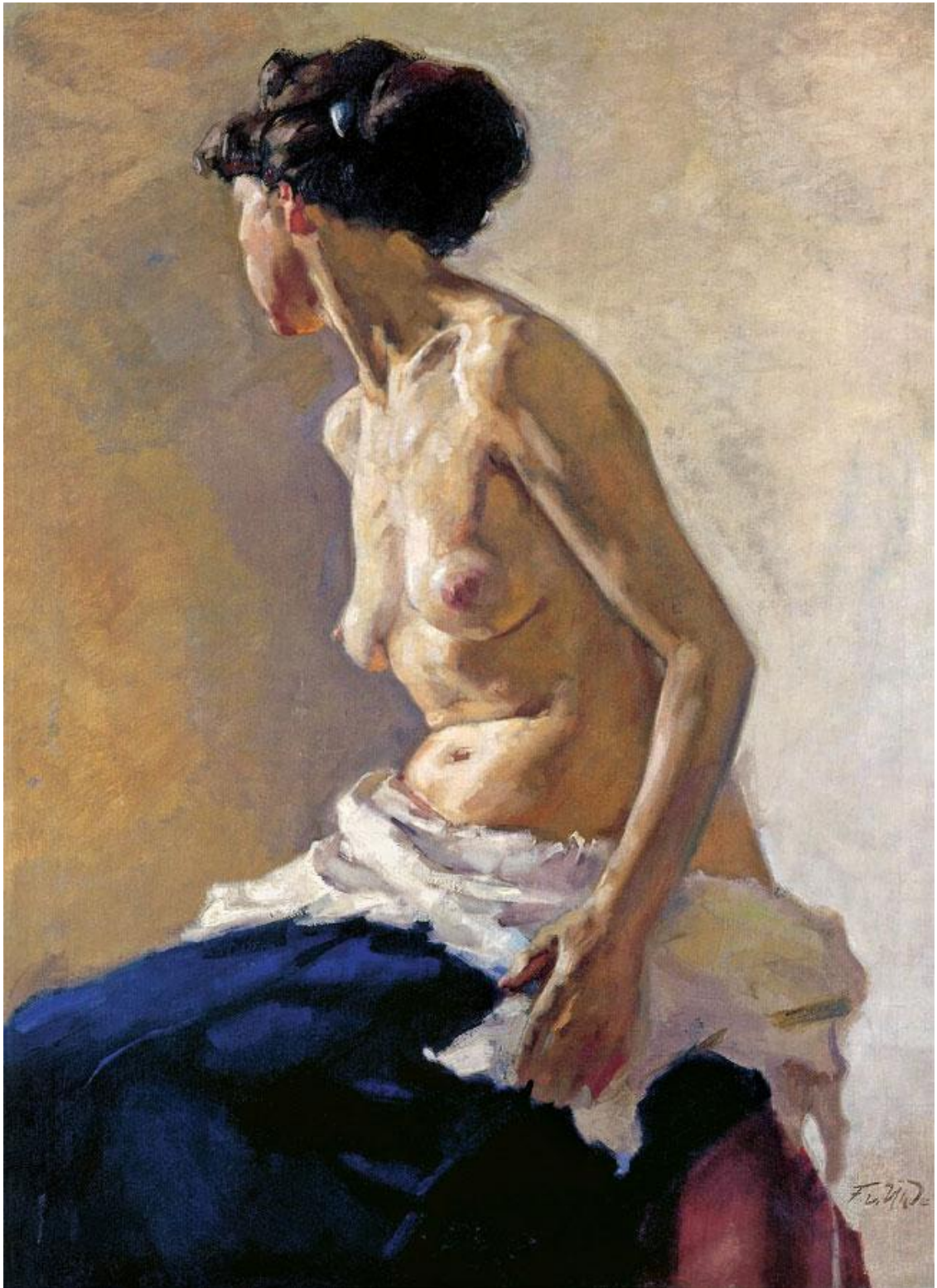


**Fritz von Uhde**, *The Picture Book I*, 1889.

Oil on canvas, 61 × 49.5 cm.

Charles and Emma Frye Collection, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington.





**Fritz von Uhde**, *Nude study*, c. 1890–1895.  
Oil on canvas, 110.5 × 80 cm.  
Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig.





**Fritz von Uhde**, *Weinendes Mädchen (Young Woman Crying)*, 1893.  
Pastel on cardboard, 26 × 20 cm.  
Private collection. Courtesy of Galerie Konrad Bayer, Andechs, Munich.

## Berlin

The schism among the Berlin artists goes back to the year 1892, to the scandal surrounding the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944), who came out of artistic no man's land that was Norway. Very early on, he was already able to garner a reputation in Germany and central Europe for being a revolutionary avant-garde artist. Today, his genius is recognised in all of Europe and beyond. His most famous works stem from the years around 1890, which he spent in Paris. In the fall of 1889, he organised a single exhibition of his work in Kristiana (present-day Oslo) which was so successful that he was granted a three-year artist's stipend by the state.

During his time in Paris, he apprenticed with Léon Bonnat (1833–1922). However, it is not in his apprenticeship that he learned the most or found the most inspiration. It was the city itself and the life led by the resident artists that truly awed him. The scene was dominated by Symbolism, a simplified and stylised style that had grown out of the influences of Paul Gauguin and the French Synthetists around Émile Bernard. The essential premise of the movement can be summed up as: "Symbolism – Nature is formed by disposition".

The results of his stay in Paris were the basis for the aforementioned exhibition in Kristiana. Apart from the state support, the exhibition also led to an invitation to Berlin, where all things Nordic were extremely popular at the time. Munch was invited to exhibit his work in the buildings of the oldest German association of artists, the *Verein Berliner Künstler*, founded in 1841. Since the president of the association maintained a close relation with the Imperial court, Munch may have hoped to find an influential sponsor in Berlin. Since Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1941) was quite vocal in matters of art and above all valued historical paintings; modern art or anything tending towards a more modern conception of art simply did not exist. This is quite evident when one considers that he commissioned 32 monumental and epic sculptures to be erected along the Siegesallee to honour and represent the history of Prussia. Consequently, he and other visitors of the exhibition were shocked and offended by Munch's paintings. Some of the older and more established painters even took the paintings as anarchist provocation. Heated discussions ensued and the exhibition was subsequently closed. The scandal dominated the headlines of newspapers for weeks but proved to be excellent publicity for Munch.

The department that exhibited his paintings did not survive the scandal and the public disapproval for long – after a week it was closed. On top of that, other Norwegian painters retracted their works since they felt belittled by the enormous attention that their fellow countryman received. Munch's fame, however, rose, to heights he was maybe not entirely comfortable with. He had many supporters among the younger artists, who soon started gathering similar-minded people and progressive authors like August Strindberg (1849–1912), the Polish author Stanislaw Przybyszewski (1868–1927) who wrote mainly in German, or art critic Julius Meier-Graefe (1867–1935) – one of Munch's more outspoken advocates – around them.

This unusual group of friends met regularly in a pub called *Zum Schwarzen Ferkel* (The Black Piglet) and fittingly named itself "piglet's circle". Among this group was also Dagny Juel (1867–1901), the future wife of Przybyszewski, whom the other members lovingly called "Ducha". However, her seductive appearance and animalistic allure did not only captivate Munch, but many other men as well. Ultimately, her presence led to friction and even arguments between the individual members which, interestingly, did not lead to a complete break-up but rather, combined with the scandal of Munch's exhibition, to the foundation of the Berlin Secession.





**Walter Leistikow**, *Aus dem Grunewald (From the Grunewald Forest)*, c. 1907.  
Oil on canvas, 75 × 100 cm.  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.





**Max Slevogt**, *Flowering Cherry Trees in Neukastel*, 1898.

Oil on canvas, 70.2 × 100.6 cm.

Saarland Cultural Heritage Foundation, Saarlandmuseum, Saarbrücken.



**Ludwig von Hofmann**, *Idyll*, 1896.

Oil on linen canvas, 111.5 × 109 cm.

Sander Collection, Berlin.



## Artists of the Berlin Secession

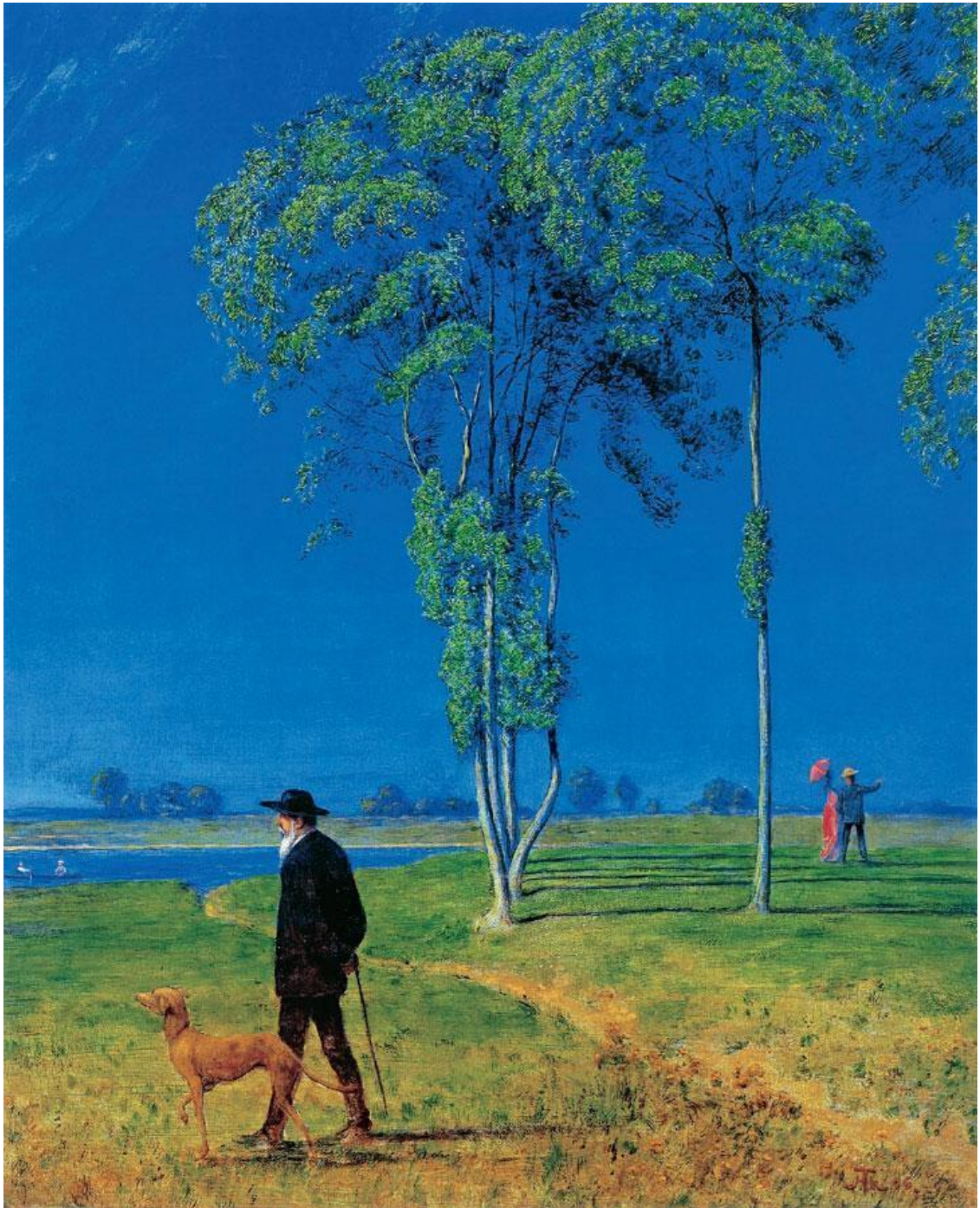
Three artists, who were enormously popular and had many imitators in 19th century Berlin, need to be addressed first: Ludwig Hoffman (1861–1945), Walter Leistikow (1865–1908), and Max Liebermann (1847–1935). Ludwig Hofmann was both a painter and a designer. His personality and passion for French art gave him the tools to render his art with a truly unique character. The world he shows us in his paintings with visually poetic eloquence is detached from all insufficiencies of life. His figures don't belong to a specific period or era; they are always young, beautiful and innocent. They bathe, exult, rest, play, or dance. Hoffmann's paintings are like shallow, pleasant dreams. Certainly, they don't move the soul deeply, but stroke it tenderly, like music. Nevertheless, they are delightful to behold and a fitting adornment for every monumental room.

A kindred spirit to Ludwig Hofmann is landscape painter Walter Leistikow, who similarly used influences from a specific school of painting – in his case, the Old Dutch masters – to create distinct style of his own. Characterised by a tranquil atmosphere, few muted colours and strong, big shapes, his paintings depicted the melancholic nature of the March of Brandenburg or the endless pastures of the Danish landscape. He, like no other painter before him – with the exception of Karl Blechen (1798–1840), maybe – made the austere beauty of the dark seas and the acheronian forests of the Berlin environs accessible to a larger audience.

Max Liebermann could be the legitimate successor of famous painter Adolph Menzel (1815–1905), whose style is apparent in many of Liebermann's paintings and drawings. Menzel is counted among the most important artists of German impressionism – if not the most important artist – having drawn inspiration from the old Master Rembrandt and from his contemporary Jean-François Millet, and thus having created an oeuvre that shows obvious nods to the two great artists but is, nevertheless, a coherent and individual achievement in itself.

Liebermann's first painting, *Gänserupferinnen (Women Plucking Geese)* (1872), caught the eye of the public and caused general indignation among Berlin's art critics and enthusiasts, who considered the subject either too mundane or too "dirty". Liebermann, however, continued in the same vein and painted *Konservenmacherinnen (Women Crafting Tin Cans)* (1872) and *Arbeiter im Rübenfeld (Workers Harvesting Turnips on the Field)* (c. 1874). He was also amongst the first German painters to head for the Netherlands in order to study certain overlooked artists like Frans Hals (1580/85–1666), and to capture the unique atmosphere of the country. Initially he focused on specifically "Dutch" motives, as in the paintings *Men's Retirement Home in Amsterdam* (1882), *Schusterwerkstatt (Cobbler's Workshop)* (1881), or *Freistunde im Waisenhaus in Amsterdam (Free Period In An Orphanage In Amsterdam)* (1881/1882), while later it was the Dutch coast and its unique light and air that captivated his artistic spirit. *Women Mending Nets* (1889) and *Frau mit den Ziegen (Woman with Goats)* (1890) were both created during that time.

Already by 1892, Max Liebermann and Walter Leistikow had created the *Vereinigung der XI* (Association of The Eleven) and were presiding over the group, which – true to its name – was a group of exactly eleven artists. After the foundation of the Berlin Secession on 2 May 1898, they, being experienced leaders, took over the direction of the newly-found group, too.



**Hans Thoma**, *Solitude*, 1906.  
Oil on canvas, 82 × 67 cm.  
Landesbank Baden-Württemberg Collection.





**Max Liebermann**, *Country House in Hilversum*, 1901.  
Oil on canvas, 65 × 80 cm.  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.



**Walter Leistikow**, *Waldstück mit Sandgrube (Corner of Forest with Sand Pit)*, c. 1905.  
Oil on canvas, 30 × 50 cm.

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

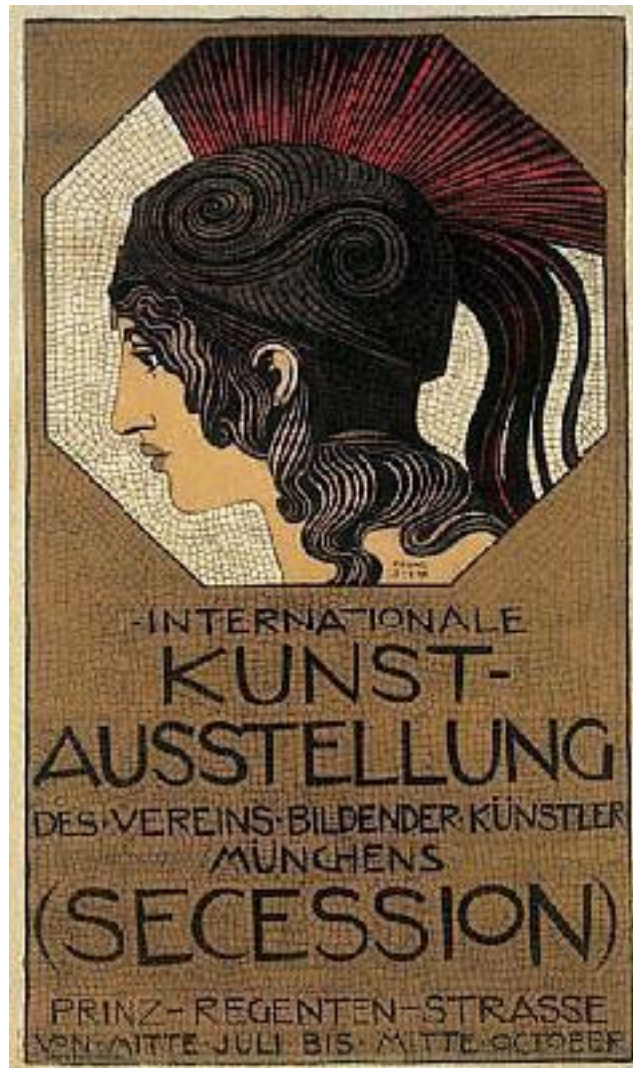
Other members of the group were Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945), Heinrich Rudolf Zille (1858–1929), Lovis Corinth (1858–1925) and Max Slevogt (1868–1932). Kollwitz worked as sculptor and designer, creating impressive works that were a testimony to her sensitivity and passion for the social problems of the city. She was born and lived in Königsberg (modern-day Kaliningrad) where she joined the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts and remained a member of the board of professors until the National Socialists deemed her “unacceptable” and removed her from her position as teacher. Her artworks, which could easily be classified as Realism, were dedicated to neglected social topics. The most important of those works are the etching cycles *Revolt of the Weavers* (1897–1898), *The Peasants’ Revolt* (1903–1908), and a series of woodcuts entitled *Der Krieg (War)* (1922/1923). Shortly before the end of the Second World War, she died in the ruins of the nearly destroyed city of Dresden.

Painter, illustrator, and photographer Heinrich Zille, who carried his Berlin nickname “Pinselheinrich” (Paint-Brush-Heinrich) proudly, was a similarly dedicated critic of the low social conditions that plagued the less privileged classes with his precise depictions of the Berlin slums and housing projects drawing attention to their plight. Soon after, the residents of Berlin started calling these parts of the town “Zille’s Milieu” because of the frequent treatment he gave the issue. Zille was a prolific artist who showcased his work in different and creative ways: in satirical magazines such as *Simplicissimus* and *Ulk*, on the walls of beer taverns or published in artistic portfolios called *Mutter Erde (Mother Earth)* (1905) and *Zwölf Künstlerdrucke (Twelve Artistic Prints)* (1909). His smooth charcoal and crayon-drawings garnered such fame that composer Willi Kollo (1904–1988) and songwriter Hans Pfanzer wrote a song that was later popularised through the interpretations by German chanson singer Claire Waldoff, and later Hildegard Knef. The famous chorus was a homage to Zille’s favourite topic and his familiarity with the “scene”:

Das war sein Milljöh  
Das war sein Milljöh.  
Jede Kneipe und Destille  
Kennt den guten Vater Zille.  
Jedes Droschkenpferd  
Hat von ihm gehört.  
Von N. O. bis J. W. D. —  
Das war sein Milljöh.

That was his milieu  
That was his milieu  
Every pub and distillery  
Knows good father Zille  
Every coach horse  
Heard of him  
From N. O. to Jottwede  
That was his milieu [loose translation]





**Franz von Stuck**, Poster for the First International Exhibition of the Association of Visual Artists of Munich (Secession), 1893.

Coloured lithograph.

Museum Villa Stuck, Munich.

Through Max Liebermann's introduction he joined the Berlin Secession, where he quickly made friends with the other artists, especially Käthe Kollwitz.

Another member from the first Generation of Secession artists was Lovis Corinth, who started his study of the fine arts with genre painter Otto Günther (1838–1884) in Königsberg. Four years after he had started his apprenticeship with Günther he moved to Munich. After serving in the military for a year he lived in Antwerp for a short time before moving to Paris in order to attend the *Académie Julian*. However the city could not satisfy his restlessness for long. He returned first to Königsberg, moved to Berlin in 1888 and three years later to Munich, where he joined the Munich Secession. Later, he left Munich again when his *Salomé* was refused for exhibition by a jury of Secession artists. Biblical and mythological themes were the main focus of his works: for example, *Home-coming Bacchants* (1895), *Kreuzabnahme* (*Deposition from the Cross*) (1895), *Crucifixion* (1897/1898), *Salomé* (1900), and *Der geblendete Simson* (*The Blinded Samson*) (1912). Furthermore, he painted excellent nude studies, intimate portraits, scenes from daily life, and still-lives. All of his works reveal an unusual amount of creative energy that truly marked Lovis Corinth as an awe-inspiring artist.

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.