
MODERNITY
AND OPULENCE
WOMEN OF THE
WIENER
WERKSTÄTTE

MODERNITY AND OPULENCE

WOMEN OF THE WIENER WERKSTÄTTE

The Jewish Museum, New York
Under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Fig. 1: Employees of the Berlin branch of the Wiener Werkstätte, 1929. Gelatin silver print by Otto Kurt Vogelsang. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

The artists included here were of Jewish faith, heritage, or had Jewish families. They are listed by the surnames used when registering with the Wiener Werkstätte, corresponding in most cases to their birth name. Nicknames, variations on names, and married names (often hyphenated with birth surname) are also included. Research on these artists is ongoing; this list represents information known in June 2026, at the time of publication.

Fig. 2: Agnes Speyer, Happy New Year, 1907. Wiener Werkstätte Postcard #60B. Chromolithograph. Neue Galerie New York, Leonard A. Lauder Collection

HILDA ASCHER
Hilde, mar. Wagner-Ascher
Born in Vienna, 1901; immigrated to London, 1938; died in London, 1999

FRITZI BERGER
Friederike, mar. Hohenberg
Born in Vienna, 1894; immigrated to New York via France and England; died in New York, 1968

IRENE BLAHY
Irene Louis, mar. Messner
Born in Vienna, 1888; her parents converted, and she stayed in Vienna; died in Vienna, 1975

HILDE BLUMBERGER
Later Jacqueline Groag, née Pick, mar. Blumberger, mar. Groag
Born in Prague, 1903; relocated to Vienna, as of 1920s; immigrated to Prague, 1938; immigrated to London, 1940; died in London, 1986

LOTTE CALM
Charlotte Alice, mar. Calm-Wierink
Born in Prague, 1897; relocated to Vienna, as of 1914; registered in Vienna as an artist, through 1934; resided in China and the United States, early 1950s; died in Leiden, the Netherlands, 1974

LUCIE FELL
Born in Kolomea, Austria-Hungary (now Kolomyia, Ukraine), 1903; location and date of death unknown

ALICE FISCHER
Born in Vienna, 1907; relocated to Berlin, after 1927; returned to Vienna, 1933; immigrated to France, 1938; after approximately three months at Oued Zem internment camp, Casablanca, immigrated to New York, 1941; died in Buncombe County, North Carolina, 2004

GERTY FOGES
Gertrude, mar. Foges-Wiesner/Wiesner
Born in Vienna, 1902; immigrated to France, 1938; immigrated to New York via Lisbon, 1941; died in New York, 1986

OLGA FREUND
mar. Hatschek
Born in Vienna, 1891; deported to Minsk; murdered in the forest of Blagowtschina, German-occupied Belarus, 1942

MIZI FRIEDMANN
Marie-Rosalie, Mizzi, Mitzi, mar. Friedmann-Otten
Born in Vienna, 1884; immigrated to New York, 1937; died in New York, 1955

MARGARETE HAM(M)ERSCHLAG
Margareta, mar. Berger-Ham[m]erschlag
Born in Vienna, 1902; resided in British-Mandate Palestine, as of 1934; immigrated to London, 1936; died in London, 1958

HEDDI HIRSCH
Hedwig, mar. Hirsch-Landesmann/Landesmann
Born in Vienna, 1895; immigrated to England; resided in Cambridge, England, as of 1939; died in Cambridge, England, 1947

EDITH HIRSCHHORN
Born in 1899, Vienna; died in 1978, East Berlin (now Berlin)

LILLY JACKER
mar. Jacker-Nettel/Nettel
Born in Vienna, 1906; immigrated to the United States, 1939; died in San Diego, 2005

LILLY JACOBSEN
Karolina, Lil[l]i, mar. Taubes
Born in Budapest, 1895; immigrated to the United States, 1934; died in Nyack, New York, 1987

ANNA LESZNAI
Amália J. Moskowitz, mar. Jászi, mar. Gergely
Born in Alsókörtvélyes, Austria-Hungary (now Nižný Hrušov, Slovakia), 1885; relocated to Vienna, 1919; immigrated to New York, 1939; died in New York, 1966

MARIA LIKARZ
Maria Stephanie Emilie, mar. Strauss-Likarz/Strauhs-Likarz/Likarz-Strauss
Born in Przemyśl, Austria-Hungary (now in Poland), 1893; immigrated to Korčula Island (now in Croatia), 1938; immigrated to Rome, after 1945; died in Rome, 1971

LIZZI LINDNER
Lissy
Born in Troppau, Austria-Hungary (now Opava, Czech Republic), 1909; immigrated to Paris, 1930s; deported to and murdered at an unknown concentration camp, date of death unknown

FRITZI LÖW
Friederike Auguste, Frieda, mar. Löw-Lazar
Born in Vienna, 1891; immigrated to Rio de Janeiro via Denmark and England, 1938; returned to Vienna, 1955; died in Vienna, 1975

PAULA LUSTIG
Pauline Sara, mar. Granichstädten
Born in Vienna, 1891; immigrated to New York via Spain, 1941; died in Newton, Massachusetts, 1969

GRETE LUZZATO
Margareta Jermina, Rita, mar. Bolaffio/Boley Bollafio
Born in Zagreb, Austria-Hungary (now in Croatia), 1898; relocated to Vienna, as of 1916; relocated to Milan, 1928; immigrated to New York via Switzerland and France, 1939; died in New York, 1995

ELLA MAX
Born in Vienna, 1897; location and date of death unknown

DITHA MOSER
Editha Maria, Dita, née Mautner von Markhof, mar. Moser; mar. Hauska
Born in Vienna, 1883; died in Gumpoldskirchen, Austria, 1969

GRETE NEUWALDER
Margaret[h]e Erwine Klara, mar. Neuwalder-Breuer
Born in Berlin, 1898; deported to Łódź Ghetto, German-occupied Poland, October 15, 1941; murdered at Chelmno death camp, German-occupied Poland, 1942

MARIANNE PERLMUTTER
Marianne Amalie, mar. Ruhemann
Born in Vienna, 1891; immigrated to England, 1935; died in London, 1967

KLARA POSNANSKI
Clara
Father: Dr. Adolf Posnanski (a rabbi); mother: Henriette (née Kalisch). Location and date of birth unknown; ran an airbrush printing studio in Vienna, 1926–37; location and date of death unknown

FRITZI PRACHT
Friederike Theresia Maria, mar. Raubitschek
Born in Vienna, 1901; her husband was deported to Dachau death camp, Germany, 1938; immigrated to England with her daughter, 1938; her husband was released, and all three family members immigrated to Sydney, 1939; died in Sydney, 1997

FELICE RIX
Lizzi, mar. Rix-Ueno/ Ueno-Rix
Born in Vienna, 1893; relocated to Kyoto, 1925 (continued designing for the Wiener Werkstätte through 1930); died in Kyoto, 1967

KITTY RIX
Katharina Laura, mar. Rix-Tichacek
Born in Vienna, 1901; immigrated to Birmingham, England, via the Hague, the Netherlands, 1938; relocated to Oxford, England, before 1945; worked as a member of the United States Army's civilian staff, Germany, 1945; returned to England, 1946; immigrated to Colombia via Venezuela, 1947; location and date of death unknown

ANNA ROTHZIEGEL
Anna Luise, Fuchs-Rothziegel, mar. Fränkel/Fränkl
Born in Stuhlweissenburg, Austria-Hungary (now Székesfehérvár, Hungary), 1894; relocated to Vienna, as of 1912; immigrated to England, 1939; returned to Vienna, 1945; died in Vienna, 1979

EMMY ROTHZIEGEL
Emilie Friederike, Fuchs-Rothziegel, mar. Bondy
Born in Vienna, 1897; relocated to Zagreb, Austria-Hungary (now in Croatia), before 1923; immigrated to New York, 1940; died in Tuscon, Arizona, 1972

MARGARETE SATTLER
Grete
Born in Vienna, 1899; location and date of death unknown

HEDWIG SCHMIDL
Born in Vienna, 1889; immigrated to England, after 1939; died in Gloucester, England, 1965

SUSI SINGER
Selma Rose, Susanne, Suzanne, mar. Singer-Schinnerl/Shinnerl
Born in Vienna, 1891; immigrated to California via Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 1939; died in Los Angeles, 1955

AGNES SPEYER
mar. Ulmann
Born in Vienna, 1875; relocated to Munich, after 1910; her husband was forced to retire, and they relocated to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, 1933; immigrated to the United States, 1940; died in New York, 1942

AMALIE SZEPS
née Schlesinger
Born in Vienna, 1838; died in Vienna, 1912

ALICE TEICHTNER
Born in Vienna, 1896; immigrated to England, 1939; worked in London, as of 1948; died in Canada, 1969

GERTRUD WEINBERGER
Gertrude, Trude
Born in Budapest, 1897; relocated to Vienna, by 1911 (active in the Wiener Werkstätte until at least 1920); immigrated to England; location and date of death unknown

HERMINE WEISS
Born in Vienna, 1893; location and date of death unknown

MARIE WEIßENBERG
Weissenberg, mar. Grün
Born in Vienna, 1900; died in Vienna, 1967

VALLY WIESELTHIER
Valerie
Born in Vienna, 1895; immigrated to New York, 1928; died in New York, 1945

MARIE WOHLMANN
Born in Lemberg, Austria-Hungary (now Lviv, Ukraine), 1893; relocated to Vienna, as of 1918; location and date of death unknown

MARIANNE ZELS
Born in Vienna, 1876; forced to retire, 1938; immigrated to Nice, 1939; died in Bad Ischl, Austria, 1957

NORA ZUCKERKANDL
Eleonore, mar. Stiasný
Born in Vienna, 1898; deported to Izbica ghetto, German-occupied Poland, April 9, 1942; likely murdered at Belzec death camp, German-occupied Poland, date of death unknown

EMMY ZWEYBRÜCK
Emma, mar. Zweybrück-Prochaska
Born in Vienna, 1890; immigrated to New York, 1939; died in New York, 1956

Fig. 3: Vally Wieselthier, Poster design for the Wiener Werkstätte's shops, 1923. Graphite and gouache on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

THE WORK-PROGRAM OF THE WIENER WERKSTÄTTE

Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser
1905

Fig. 4: Vally Wieselthier, Gudrun Baudisch, and Kitty Rix in the ceramics workshop of the Wiener Werkstätte, c. 1925. Gelatin silver print by Mario Wiberaz. Universität für angewandte Kunst, Sammlungen und Archiv (UAKS), Vienna

The boundless evil, caused by shoddy mass-produced goods and by the uncritical imitation of earlier styles, is like a tidal wave sweeping across the world. We have been cut adrift from the culture of our forefathers and are cast hither and thither by a thousand desires and considerations. The machine has largely replaced the hand and the business-man has supplanted the craftsman. To attempt to stem this torrent would seem like madness.

Yet for all that we have founded our workshop. Our aim is to create an island of tranquility in our own country, which, amid the joyful hum of arts and crafts, would be welcome to anyone who professes faith in [John] Ruskin and [William] Morris. We are calling for all those who regard culture in this sense as valuable and we hope that the errors we are bound to commit will not dissuade our friends from lending their support.

We wish to create an inner relationship linking public, designer, and worker and we want to produce good and simple articles of everyday use. Our guiding principle is function, utility our first condition, and our strength must lie in good proportions and the proper treatment of material. We shall seek to decorate when it seems required but we do not feel obliged to adorn at any price. . . . The merit of craftsmanship and artistic conception must be recognized once more and be valued accordingly. Handicrafts must be measured by the same standards as the work of a painter or sculptor.

We cannot and will not compete with cheap work, which has succeeded largely at the expense of the worker. We have made it our foremost duty to help the worker recover pleasure in his task and obtain humane conditions in which to carry it out, but this can only be achieved step by step. . . .

Our carpenters' workshops have always insisted upon the exactest and most reliable craftsmanship. But nowadays people have unfortunately grown so used to catch-penny trash that a piece of furniture executed even with a minimum of care seems quite out of reach. . . . The ordinary citizen of today, like the worker, must be proud and fully

aware of his own worth and not seek to compete with other social stations, which have accomplished their cultural task and are justified in looking back on an artistically splendid heritage. Our citizens have still far from carried out their artistic duties. Now it is their turn to do full justice to the new developments. Just striving to own pictures, however magnificent, cannot possibly suffice. As long as our towns, houses, rooms, cupboards, utensils, clothes, jewelry, language, and feelings fail to express the spirit of the times in a clear, simple, and artistic manner, we shall remain indefinitely far behind our ancestors and no pretense will conceal our lack. We should also like to draw attention to the fact that we are all too aware that, under certain circumstances, an acceptable article can be made by mechanical means, provided that it bears the stamp of manufacture, but it is not our purpose to pursue that aspect yet. We want to do what the Japanese have always done, and no one could imagine machine-made arts and crafts in Japan. We shall try to accomplish what lies within our power, but our progress will depend on the encouragement of all our friends. We are not free to follow fancy. We stand with both feet in reality and await the commissions.

Excerpted from Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, Katalog mit Arbeitsprogramm der Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna, 1905), English translation by Tim and Charlotte Benton and originally published in Form and Function: A Source Book for the History of Architecture and Design, 1890–1939, edited by Tim and Charlotte Benton and Denis Sharp (Crosby Lockwood Staples in association with the Open University Press, 1975). Reprinted by permission of Tim Benton.

MODERNITY AND OPULENCE

WOMEN OF THE WIENER WERKSTÄTTE

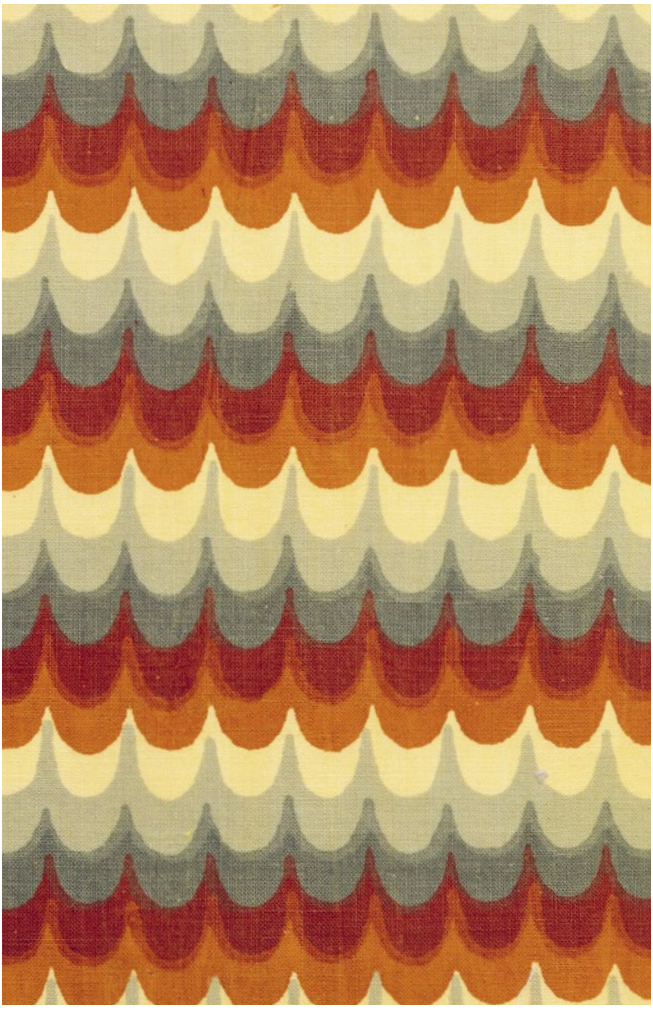
Kristina Parsons

The Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops, WW) was a multidisciplinary collective active in Vienna between 1903 and 1932. Through designs that embraced functional forms, sophisticated aesthetics, and luxurious craftsmanship, the WW sought to bring art into every aspect of daily life, placing equal importance on both fine and applied (or, decorative) arts. With the support of prominent patrons, the WW cultivated an upper-class clientele, including a circle of progressive Jewish intellectuals, who advanced the collective's reformist ideals by conspicuously integrating the WW's products into their lives.

Histories of the WW have often emphasized and reinforced the mythic status of its founders: the architect Josef Hoffmann, the painter and graphic artist Koloman Moser, and the industrialist art collector Fritz Waerndorfer. With the disruption of World War I (1914–18), however, the WW increasingly benefited from the contributions of women artists. These women expanded the collective's modernist principles—initially rooted in uniformity and restrained ornamentation—by incorporating bold decorative approaches that drew from a diverse range of sources and fueled new feminist sensibilities. Recent scholarship has identified nearly two hundred women artists known to have worked for the WW—approximately one quarter were of Jewish faith, heritage, or had Jewish families.[1]

Modernity and Opulence: Women of the Wiener Werkstätte highlights these women, whose experiments with color, pattern, and form introduced expressivity, sensuality, and whimsy to the collective's designs. Vienna underwent dramatic transformation in the first decades of the twentieth century, which saw burgeoning opportunities for women and a sharp rise in antisemitism. These women—artists and patrons alike—refused to conform to conventional expectations and used their creative output to challenge cultural norms, remaking modernity in their own image. Their oeuvres, careers, and lives form an expansively heterogeneous group; their impact on the histories of art, design, and culture is equally immeasurable.

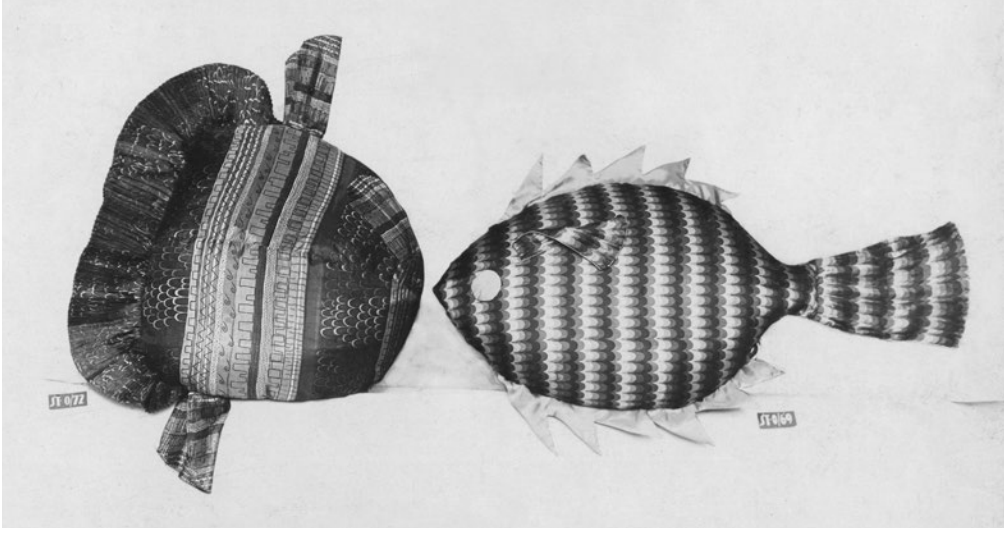
Though this exhibition makes no claims to completion, *Modernity and Opulence* reintroduces, for the first time,



Previous, Fig. 5:
Model wearing a Wiener Werkstätte dress in "Archibald" fabric designed by Felice Rix, 1918. Gelatin silver print by Alexander Binder. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Fig. 6: Lotte Calm (designer), Franz Süss (woodblock carver), Gustav Ziegler (textile printer), Friedler & Dr. Teltscher AMA (textile printer), "Akustik" (Acoustics) fabric, 1923, manufactured 1923-28. Printed plain-weave cotton. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

Fig. 7: Cushions made of the "Tokio" (Tokyo) fabric designed by Felice Rix (left) and "Akustik" (Acoustics) fabric designed by Lotte Calm (right), c. 1925. Gelatin silver print. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955



a vital contingent of Jewish women artists and patrons into collective memory and builds a platform for future research. As the historian Julie Johnson has posited, such investigations are “not just about the connection of so many Jewish women artists to the lost history of fin-de-siècle Vienna; [but are] also about methodology. Acknowledging that memory is by definition repetition means also that memory is the canon. The repeated reproductions of works of art, along with the stories about the artists who made them, are what allow works of art to be included in the memory system or canon.”[2]

While such erasures are not the explicit focus of this project, *Modernity and Opulence* nevertheless points to the forces that caused them, including art and design history’s traditional male bias and the far more sinister actions of Nazis who drove people into exile, arrested and deported them to concentration camps, and murdered them. A number of the Jewish women who worked for the WW as artists or supported it as patrons did not survive the Holocaust; others escaped Europe but were never able to restart their careers. In some notable cases, artists began again in a new country, their creativity and skill welcomed in a different cultural context. While a handful of the WW’s artists captured the attention of the contemporary media, ensuring an ample record of their lives alongside their surviving oeuvre, in other cases artists are known only through the inclusion of their name in a WW logbook or historic photograph, and further records to substantiate the lives of these once-renowned artists remain lost. Though these women fought for respect and recognition during their lifetime, more must be done for their legacies to be brought fully into the discursive fold.[3] Such endeavors continue here.

ARTS AND CRAFTS BEGINNINGS AND THE SECESSION

In 1897 a group of young artists gathered in the salon of the noted journalist Berta Zuckerkandl, dismayed with the state of Viennese contemporary art. These artists, later known as the Secessionists, wanted the freedom to explore new formal and stylistic modes, as well as to exhibit the

Fig. 8: Hilda Ascher, *Wrapping paper*, after 1920. Block print on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Fig. 9: Marie Weißenberg, *Endpaper*, 1920–21. Block print on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation

work of the international avant-garde in Vienna. They declared a "sacred spring" (*ver sacrum* in Latin) to indicate a season of artistic renewal that gained social and financial support particularly in the liberally minded upper classes. Among the progressive thinkers affiliated with the Secession were Josef Hoffmann, Gustav Klimt, Wilhelm List, Koloman Moser, and Joseph Maria Olbrich. Banded together under the motto "to every age its art, to art its freedom," the Secessionists published a journal—also called *Ver Sacrum*—that showcased its liberal ideologies through innovative approaches to graphic design and organized exhibitions that profoundly reshaped the course of modern visual arts in Vienna. Zuckerkandl used her position as an art critic at a daily newspaper, *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, to sway the public's attitudes in support of the Secession's novel conceptions of art. Coupled with her experience as a salonnière, Zuckerkandl understood her pivotal position as intermediary for "the art of the day, between those who create it and those who appreciate it."[4]

The first Secession exhibition (1898) presented "a panorama of modern art from abroad, so that the public might acquire a new and higher standard for evaluating domestic production."[5] Subsequent presentations included a showcase of more than seven hundred works of Japanese art, adding more fuel to the European fascination with Japonisme following the "reopening" of the country in 1853 (Sixth Exhibition, 1900); a presentation of international Arts and Crafts movements with creations by the Scottish designers Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Margaret Macdonald, and Frances (née Macdonald) and Herbert McNair, who were known as the Glasgow Four, alongside the English designer Charles Robert Ashbee, and the Belgian Henry van de Velde (Eighth Exhibition, 1900); and an exhibition celebrating the Viennese composer Ludwig van Beethoven for which Klimt created the now-famous *Beethoven Frieze* (Fourteenth Exhibition, 1902). These presentations speak to tenets that would later be fundamental to the Wiener Werkstätte upon its founding: the influence and metabolism of global art practices, an emphasis on high-quality craftsmanship executed through new visual vocabularies, and an interest in combining architecture, artworks, everyday objects,

Fig. 10: Klara Posnanski, "Hallstadt" fabric, 1926. Printed plain-weave silk. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

Fig. 11: Marianne Perlmutter, Proof for "Donauwellen" (Danube Waves) fabric design, 1910–17. Block print on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

and decorative elements into a harmonious total work of art (gesamtkunstwerk).

The Wiener Werkstätte aimed to integrate these impulses into daily life, responding to nineteenth-century industrialization and following in the footsteps of Arts and Crafts.[6] The architect Josef Hoffmann, the painter and graphic artist Koloman Moser, and the industrialist art collector and financial backer Fritz Waerndorfer founded the WW with the aim of countering the perceived ills of modern society and "the boundless evil, caused by shoddy mass-produced goods."[7] Notably, the initial funds for this actually came from Bertha Waerndorfer (née Neumann), Fritz's mother and a dedicated patron of the arts.

The WW greatly romanticized the traditional methods of craftsmanship based on a guild system, and so was comprised of different studios for metalwork, bookbinding and leatherwork, furniture, and later textiles, fashion, and ceramics, among others. Metalwork, glassware, and lace making had storied histories across the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire—specialized knowledge that the WW cultivated while introducing modern aesthetic approaches to these disciplines. Works were created as one-offs, produced in limited quantities or, in some instances, made at a larger scale in partnership with semi-industrial manufacturers. Such collaborators included Wenzel Bachmann & Co (founded in 1842, Vienna) for cutlery, Backhausen Johann & Söhne (founded in 1849, Vienna) for woven textiles, J. & L. Lobmeyr (founded in 1823, Vienna) and Johann Oertel & Co. (founded in 1869, Haida, Austria-Hungary) for glass, and Gustav Ziegler (Vienna) for printed fabrics.

In the years leading up to World War I, the WW produced a stunning range of objects as well as several fully realized gesamtkunstwerk that would play a key role in shaping ideas of European modernism: the Purkersdorf Sanatorium wellness center (1904–6), the Cabaret Fledermaus theater and nightclub (1907), and the Palais Stoclet private residence (1905–11).[8] While at times the WW's approach privileged restrained ornamentation, artists also shirked these stylistic constraints, especially in later

Fig. 12: Hilda Jesser, Lotte Calm, Fritzi Löw, and Felice Rix at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Applied Arts), c. 1916. Gelatin silver print. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 2020

years. Such a flowering of aesthetic approaches began with the departure of Moser in 1907; was supported by Eduard Josef Wimmer-Wisgrill as head of the WW Fashion Department; continued with the arrival of the virtuosic Dagobert Peche in 1912, first as a freelance designer and later as artistic director; and accelerated with the creation of the experimental Künstler-Werkstätte (Artists' Workshops) in 1916, which brought numerous women artists into the WW's fold. Complicated relationships to gender, ornament, and craft, however, underpin these discourses, and the omission of these subjects from existing scholarship has prevented a fuller picture of the WW's output, including much by women artists. It is this chapter of the WW's history, which embraced an opulent, pluralistic aesthetic sensibility and provided a crucial platform for women artists, that is the subject of this exhibition.

THE ARTISTS' WORKSHOPS

Many of the women artists of the Wiener Werkstätte had studied and trained at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Applied Arts) [Fig. 12], where Hoffmann and Moser taught. From its inception in 1868, the school admitted women to take classes in sculpture, architecture, ornamental and figurative drawing, and painting. Women were still banned, however, from attending the life-drawing classes (studying nude models was deemed inappropriate for them) required to advance to most specialist programs such as architecture. Instead, the women students trained in applied (decorative) arts, which were considered acceptable for women to pursue due to those fields' perceived adjacency to domestic skills. Nevertheless, the Kunstgewerbeschule was one of few ways that women could study and train as artists outside of costly private tutoring prior to the admission of women to fine arts academies in the 1920s.

The Künstler-Werkstätte (Artists' Workshops) was created in 1916 as an experimental studio within the Wiener Werkstätte and became a pivotal professional pipeline for women artists to continue their training while providing opportunities for paid labor as shortages during World War I (1914–18) brought women into the workforce.[9]

Fig. 13: Mizi Friedmann, Design for cigarette case and ashtray, c. 1920. Colored pencil, graphite, and gouache on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Fig. 14: Felice Rix, Design for a papier-mâché bonbonnière with tassels, 1925, Wiener Werkstatte Model D 183. Graphite and gouache on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955.

Fig. 15: Vally Wieselthier, Design for fireplace cladding, c. 1927. Graphite and gouache on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

As the curator Anne-Katrin Rossberg has noted, the Künstler-Werkstätte's establishment stemmed from Hoffmann's interest in "pool[ing] gifted talents in the middle of the war. Promising great artistic freedom under the best possible conditions"[10] and was further supported by Peche. The WW artist Vally Wieselthier later wrote in her memoirs that artists at the Künstler-Werkstätte had, "a huge studio, each one of us got a key for himself and we had all the workshops imaginable for our free use. We also had the best-trained foremen and workers and all the time and materials we desired. . . . We simply did as we pleased, and whenever the Wiener Werkstätte sold one of our products, the lucky winner always threw a big party."[11]

Künstler-Werkstätte artists worked on a commission model, only being paid if the WW officially accepted their designs, but were given full rein of the department's resources to experiment with materials and forms. In this environment that prized originality and expressivity, artists developed works that touched on every aspect of modern living in a range of styles: swirling curvilinear forms, boldly stylized botanic and figurative motifs, graphic geometric and rhythmic linear patterns, extravagant color palettes, historicism that interpreted Baroque, Biedermeier, Classical, Empire, and Rococo styles, folk art traditions, and radically fanciful abstractions. Some of the women who first came to the WW through the Künstler-Werkstätte contributed just a few designs; others went on to have prolific careers as full-time WW employees; and still others designed intermittently at the WW before establishing independent art businesses.

The plausibility of realizing a gesamtkunstwerk had largely fallen away by the end of the World War I as Vienna emerged into new sociopolitical and economic circumstances following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Consequently, the WW continued its project of aestheticizing and modernizing daily life primarily through smaller, individual pieces—everything from cigarette cases to wallpaper—rather than holistically designed environments. Given the unique confluence of the interwar economy, the women's movements that saw Viennese women achieve suffrage in 1918, and the WW's commitment to

Fig. 16: Fritzi Pracht, Design for a costume, c. 1920. Graphite and gouache on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

Fig. 17: Maria Likarz, Design for a Fasching carnival costume, 1920. Graphite and gouache on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

the Künstler-Werkstätte, many women were able to become professional artists. Others used their economic and social standing to act as arts patrons, promoting and amplifying the WW's vision.

THE ARTISTS

Among the Jewish artists who were the most prolific and are still recognized today are Felice Rix (later Rix-Ueno) and Vally Wieselthier. Over the many years that Rix worked for the WW, she produced several hundred designs. These included everything from toys, tableware, window displays, fashion accessories, and poster designs to wallpapers, pillows, and more than a hundred textile patterns. Rix imparted a quirky sense of joy; her unique idiom is replete with expressive floral motifs and lyrical colorways that were ahead of their time. Rix made her first designs for the WW in 1915, while she was still a student at the Kunstgewerbeschule, decorating patriotic glasses designed by her teacher (Hoffmann) to support the war effort. She deepened her engagement with the WW in 1916 through the Künstler-Werkstätte and continued to design for the WW even after moving abroad.

Rix met the Japanese architect, Isaburo Ueno, who was working in Hoffmann's studio, and the two married in 1925. The couple's relocation to Kyoto that same year would have a stylistic impact on her output, but Japanese artistic practices had influenced Rix's aesthetic impulses even before the couple met. Given the popularity of Japanese art practice in Vienna—thanks in part to the Secession's Sixth Exhibition of 1900 and the surrounding mania for Japonisme—it is likely Rix was introduced to katagami, a traditional textile dyeing technique that uses hand-cut stencils to generate patterns, in classes with Hoffmann and Moser.[12] In Japan, Rix opened an architecture and design office with her husband, taught as a university professor, and established the International Design School in the early 1960s.

Vally Wieselthier was among the WW's most influential designers, gaining international notoriety for her

Fig. 18: Grete Neuwalder, Ali, 1919. Oxide wash and earthenware. Neuwalder Family Collection, USA

Fig. 19: Kitty Rix, Girl Riding a Cat, c. 1920s. Hand-built and glazed ceramic. Cleveland Museum of Art, Educational Purchase Fund

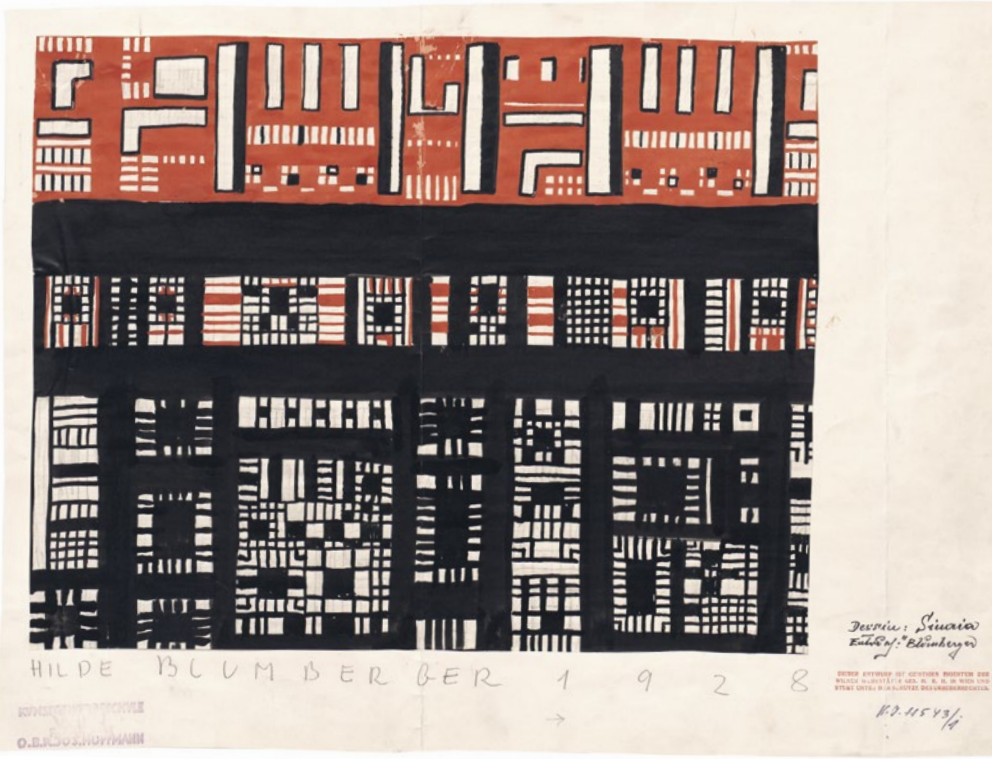
Fig. 20: Kitty Rix, Boy on a Horse, c. 1920s. Hand-built and glazed ceramic. Cleveland Museum of Art, Educational Purchase Fund

ceramics. She was born to an upper-middle-class Jewish family closely affiliated with the Habsburg court and studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna from 1914 to 1920 under Hoffmann and Moser, as well as Franz Čižek, Michael Powolny, and Rosalia Rothansl. Wieselthier was resolute in her aspiration to an art career, and defying convention, her father gave his blessing for her to pursue her ambitions and never be forced to marry. Wieselthier, like Rix, got her start with the WW through the Künstler-Werkstätte, but then ran her own independent pottery studio from 1922 to 1927, after which she sold the business to the WW to become its head of ceramics. Her dynamic approach to glaze, ornament, and form enlivened utilitarian pieces by combining bright colorways, abstract stylized motifs, and striking geometric forms. Their charm and dynamic spontaneity belies the exceptional skill with which she approached her work and taught other artists within the WW, including Gudrun Baudisch, Susi Singer, and Kitty Rix (Felice's youngest sister) [Figs. 19 and 20]. The originality in Wieselthier's ceramics translated to other mediums, as the artist designed glass vessels, children's toys, advertising posters, textile designs, and fashion accessories.

Wieselthier is one of the few WW artists who found success abroad, having traveled to New York in 1928, when her works appeared in a major ceramics exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Additionally represented in that exhibition were several other WW artists such as Gudrun Baudisch, Hertha Bucher, Dina Kuhn, Kitty Rix, and Susi Singer (in some cases the work shown was produced for other companies). Thereafter, Wieselthier established a veritable career in the United States, joining the modernist design association Contempora alongside the couturier Paul Poiret, graphic designers Julius Klinger and Lucian Bernhard, architects Bruno Paul and Erich Mendelsohn, industrial designer Joseph Claude Sinel, and painter Rockwell Kent. She also designed striking department store window displays, sculpted and painted relief murals, and formed ceramics at increasingly ambitious scales. In an illustration of Wieselthier's confidence regarding her eminent position within the field of arts and design, she wrote a telegram to President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Fig. 21: Lizzy Lindner, Design for "Indiana" fabric, c. 1928. Gouache on tracing paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

Fig. 22: Hilde Blumberger, Design for "Sinaia" fabric, 1928. Graphite, ink, and gouache on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955



demanding he intervene to defend her reputation and "tell these people who I am" when she was controversially dismissed from a teaching post at Louisiana State University in 1938 for seemingly provocative behavior.

Of course, many artists left Vienna under entirely different circumstances following the rise of fascism. Hilde Blumberger escaped to London with her second husband, Jacques Groag, in 1938, refashioned herself as Jacqueline Groag, and successfully began anew. She designed wallpapers and textiles for Parisian couturiers Coco Chanel, Jeanne Lanvin, and Elsa Schiaparelli, and for the Victoria and Albert Museum's 1946 *Britain Can Make It* exhibition and London's famed fabric producers such as Liberty & Co. Others, including Alice Fischer, Anna Lesznai, and Susi Singer turned to teaching after escaping to the United States.

Olga Freund, Lizzy Lindner, Grete Neuwalder, and Nora Zuckerkandl were all murdered in the Holocaust, while the fates of others including Lucie Fell, Ella Max, Klara Posnanski, Margarete Sattler, Hermine Weiss, and Marie Wohlmann remain unknown. In the case of Posnanski, Rossberg's research has uncovered that "she was the daughter of the rabbi Dr. Adolf Posnanski and Henriette, née Kalisch. Between 1926 and 1937 she ran an airbrush printing press, first at Fröbel Gasse 21 in Vienna's sixteenth district, then at Pernerstorfer Gasse 57 in Vienna's twentieth district."[13] At least one ceramic piece by Max survives in the collection of the Leopold Museum in Vienna, though substantial biographical details have yet to be recovered. Incredibly, a few examples of Neuwalder's work remain in her family, some of whom escaped Vienna by Kindertransport in 1939. The sculptures are believed to have been carefully hidden in a chest at the Viennese chocolate shop Demel and were shipped to Neuwalder's surviving family in New York in 1948.[14]

A NEW WOMAN FOR A NEW ERA

Fin-de-siècle Vienna was in a state of radical transformation: vast urban renewal campaigns modernized

Figs. 23 and 24: Gertrud Weinberger, Plate 12, and Lotte Calm, Plate 8, from the portfolio "Das Leben einer Dame Wien" ("The Life of a Lady, Vienna"), 1916. Linocut with hand-colored additions on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Overleaf, Fig. 25: Staircase to the Wiener Werkstätte textile department on Kärntner Straße 32, Vienna, designed by Lotte Calm, Lilly Jacobsen, Fritzi Löw, Anny Schröder, and Vally Wieselthier, 1918. Gelatin silver print by Bruno Reiffenstein. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

infrastructure and expanded the city's footprint; the population boomed as new industries and factories attracted workers; a vibrant art scene drew artists from across Austria-Hungary; consumer culture and mass media emerged and expanded; and popular ideologies surfaced around life reform in political, social, artistic, hygienic, and medicinal spheres. In this swirling milieu, Viennese women occupied a paradoxical position: While the city was a hub for the avant-garde, the cultural changes they sought to enact still frequently excluded women.[15]

Even so, women increasingly engaged in new, traditionally masculine-coded practices such as working at paid jobs and strolling in public. Such shifts were understood in this period to represent the emergence of diverse subjectivities gathered under the headline of the "new woman." Popular culture of the period even caricatured this new woman as a fashionably dressed, short-haired "female decorative artist" who smoked cigarettes.[16] As the historian Katya Motyl describes, "For contemporaries, these practices were especially controversial because of their perceived unwomanliness—that is, their tactical subversion of normative, hegemonic femininity. But in subverting normative femininity, they also managed to offer new ways of acting and being a woman, of transforming womanhood for years to come."[17]

The WW fashion department provided such an opportunity: Women could directly impact public perceptions of modern femininity by designing clothing and accessories for other women. Women's dress was an important point of convergence between larger impulses toward reform and feminist politics—fashion was then, as now, understood for its capacity to be a revolutionary statement.[18] A new silhouette, aptly called "reform dress," gained popularity in this period, moving away from the curvaceous hourglass or s-shape that required a corset and toward a slimmer, more straight-bodied form with a relatively unbound waist. As Motyl explains, "This loose, linear style promised liberation, an idea that, as the women's movement was gaining ground in Vienna, appealed to women who felt constrained by the burdens of normative womanhood."[19] Garments were loose and flowing to avoid constricting

the body and could feature bright colors and patterns to celebrate the individual's self-expression. The WW's embrace of reform dress became an unabashed declaration of modern values and an important articulation of the "new woman" in public spheres, albeit for the women who could afford such styles.

The WW fashion department was established in 1911 thanks to the Jewish artist and designer Marianne Zels, who had the dressmaking certification required to officially register the trade entity. The textile designs produced for this studio most clearly illustrate the unique ways that the WW supported the originality of its artists, the skill of its craftspeople, and the expertise of manufacturers to produce goods of the highest quality. The textiles of the WW were made prolifically: By some estimates approximately 550 new patterns were designed and produced between 1910–17, with the department's total production estimated around 1800 patterns, some in several different colorways, resulting in tens of thousands of offerings. The sweeping variety of block-printed textiles highlights the continued popularity of their patterns and the fashions made with them. Financial records further suggest that, at times, the fashion branch of the WW single-handedly kept the entire enterprise afloat.

In 1918 the WW opened a new shop at Kärntner Straße 32 in Vienna selling lace, fabric, and lighting fixtures with shades made from WW textiles. While Hoffmann designed the building's interior, a number of the WW's women artists, including Lotte Calm, Lilly Jacobsen, Hilda Jesser, Fritzi Löw, Felice Rix, Reni Schaschl, Anny Schröder, and Vally Wieselthier, decorated the walls and ceilings [Fig. 25]. Rix painted the ceiling of the lace display room in an enchanting motif featuring elongated florals, birds, and feathers. This model of a male artist, often Hoffmann, designing an object's form and employing one of the WW's women artists to contribute the surface treatment was customary within the workshop in this early period but changed in subsequent years. Following World War I, the purview of women artists expanded dramatically, seeing them take charge of designing and producing all aspects of a work, rather than being restricted to surface

Fig. 26: Vally Wieselthier, Head of a woman, 1928. Wiener Werkstätte Model 494. Glazed earthenware. Galerie bei der Albertina – Zetter, Vienna

Fig. 27: Fritzi Berger, Fashion, 1912. Wiener Werkstätte Postcard #764. Chromolithograph. Neue Galerie New York, Leonard A. Lauder Collection

Fig. 28: Vally Wieselthier, Kneeling figure, 1927. Wiener Werkstätte Model KO 5842. Glazed earthenware. Galerie bei der Albertina – Zetter, Vienna

decoration, while tackling a wider range of object types and interior schemes.

Conceptions of the "new woman" nonetheless attracted negative public discourse that sought to discredit their endeavors as anxiety arose about these women's futures as homemakers, wives, and mothers. Their subversive femininity and overtly modern appearance was often used as evidence for their perceived lack of seriousness, with one condemnation characterizing the WW (with its many women artists) as a "scandalous bimbo business."[20] The WW's most vocal and virulent critics included Adolf Loos, whose 1910 treatise *Ornament and Crime* pointed at the WW's promotion of decorative surfaces as evincing its degenerate nature and later characterized its embrace of women artists as cause for "Viennese Woe."[21] Julius Klinger wrote near hysterically in the press, starting his attack with a direct jab at the WW patron and financier Mäda Primavesi: "Mäda! . . . One immediately thinks of something fractured, exaggerated, affected, frivolous, false, artificial, and above all s u p e r f l u o u s, in a nutshell: a product of the WW. Viennese Broads' Decorative Art—whom does that not fill with feminine horror! These fiddling maenads do not even let their first names alone; they pick and poke at them for so long that they finally end up being called Fini, Zoe, Noe, Loe, Gabi, Lydi, Lo, Valley, . . . or even Mäda."[22]

The artists of the WW mined and parodied these trivializing stereotypes of the woman craftsperson as a naïve, childish dilettante and reclaimed its aesthetic as a powerful vision of an emancipated woman. This expression is particularly evident in the brightly colored, stylized ceramic heads made by several women artists of the WW. The scholar Megan Brandow-Faller notes that these works were "a distinct form of expressionist ceramics that parodied the tropes of decorative femininity wielded by misogynist critics, including women's supposed penchants for vanity, superficiality, and face painting [Figs. 26 and 28]."[23] Nevertheless, disparagement in the press had to contend with the admiration and recognition of these artists by critics such as Berta Zuckerkandl and others of the WW's inner circle who carried significant social capital.

Fig. 29: The Wiener Werkstätte's stand at the artists' garden party in Weigls Dreher Park, 1907. Postcard by Atelier Elsa. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Fig. 30: Madame d'Ora (born Dora Kallmus), Portrait of Berta Zuckerkandl, 1908. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna

The presence of women at the WW was impossible to ignore: They constituted a notable segment of the WW's workforce and were a source of virtuosic artistry whose work was displayed throughout Vienna, at various international exhibitions, and in the press to great acclaim.

PATRONAGE AND PROMOTION

Jewish women played a vital role in the success of the Wiener Werkstätte, serving as clients and cultural intermediaries who promoted and amplified its vision [Figs. 29 and 30]. Fritz Waerndorfer, along with his wife Lili, was rooted in upper-middle-class Jewish circles and thus a key conduit for the WW to reach its clientele. Several members of the aforementioned journalist Berta Zuckerkandl's extended family are included in this. Berta's mother, Amalie Szeps (née Schlesinger) was an arts patron in addition to producing beadwork for the WW in the later years of her life. Berta's niece, Nora, worked as a WW artist and eventually inherited a sizable share of the WW-designed Purkersdorf Sanatorium, originally commissioned by Berta's brother Victor with his wife Paula.[24] Other notable patrons included the women's rights advocate Magda Mautner von Markhof (the WW artist Ditha Moser's sister) and Margaret Stonborough-Wittgenstein. These prominent women constructed and projected their modern feminist sensibilities through arts patronage, commissioning Wiener Werkstätte furniture and interiors, wearing its fashions and jewelry, and using its objects in their day-to-day life, embodying the spirit of the gesamtkunstwerk. Those that believed in the WW often also supported artists of the Secession and are known today through portraits painted by Gustav Klimt; this includes the salon hostess and advocate for social reform Adele Bloch-Bauer [Fig. 31], known as Klimt's "Woman in Gold."

Elisabeth Lederer, along with her parents, August and Szerena Lederer, cultivated deep relationships with Klimt—the artist painted three generations of women in the family—resulting in the largest collection of his works in private hands. At Szerena's behest, Klimt and the WW collaborated on the Lederer's charity galas, key venues

Fig. 31: Gustav Klimt, Study for Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I, 1903. Charcoal on paper. The Jewish Museum, New York, Gift of the Muriel and William Rand Collection, 1997-137

for Jewish haute bourgeoise women to raise funds to benefit worthy causes, while simultaneously acting as marketplaces for the promotion and consumption of art. Indeed, this closeness may have saved Elisabeth's life after the Anschluss with Germany: Szerena convinced authorities that Klimt was Elisabeth's biological father, gaining some protection for her daughter as "half Jewish."

Friederike Maria Beer was deeply enmeshed in the WW's milieu of artists and styled herself as a "walking advertisement for the Wiener Werkstätte."[25] In a portrait painted by Klimt, Beer wears a vibrant full-length WW dress made in the "Marina" textile designed by Dagobert Peche and a fur coat, which has been flipped inside out to showcase the contrasting WW patterned lining. In another painting by Klimt, the artist Johanna Staude (née Widlicka) is depicted wearing a blouse fashioned from Martha Alber's "Blätter" ("Leaves") textile for the WW. Staude's boldly patterned garment takes up the majority of the canvas, giving prominence to the design. "Blätter" also appears as the upholstery fabric in a painting by the Secessionist artist Wilhelm List. A woman lounges on the settee wearing loose umbrella drawers and a sleeveless chemise (undergarments associated with dress reform), allowing for ease of movement. Indeed, she may well have been such a progressive woman in real life—the sitter is thought to be Wally Neuzil, who often modeled for Egon Schiele and later trained as a nurse [Figs. 32, 33, and 34].

One notable figure, Broncia Koller-Pinell, was uniquely positioned as both a patron of the arts and an artist. On the occasion of a 1911 exhibition of Koller-Pinell's work at Galerie Miethke in Vienna, Berta Zuckerkandl wrote, "Well acquainted with all the problems and latest insights on the laws of style, which encompass Klimt, the Wiener Werkstätte, and the Kunstgewerbeschule, she came to view the physical world as a visual experience that, although always strongly rooted in the perception of nature, was ornamentally structured."[26] Koller-Pinell embodied the spirit of the times while actively shaping her world through art practice and patronage. Koller-Pinell and her husband, Hugo, regularly turned to the WW to furnish their residences. In a portrait by her studio mate Heinrich

Fig. 32: Lehrlingsheim Zukunft (likely publisher), Wiener Werkstätte (workshop), Martha Alber (textile designer), Rosh Hashanah (New Year) Greeting, c. 1910–11. Lithograph on paper. The Jewish Museum, New York, Purchase: Traditional Judaica Acquisitions Committee Fund, 2006-3

Fig. 33: Charlotte Beer and Friederike Maria Beer wearing dresses designed by the Wiener Werkstätte, 1914. Gelatin silver print. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna

Fig. 34: Wilhelm List, Young Woman in Undergarments, c. 1910–11. Oil on canvas. Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Mary Ingebrand-Pohlad Endowment for Twentieth Century Paintings

Schröder, Koller-Pinell wears a reform-style dress with a square neckline and offset by a teal pendant that Hoffmann designed for the WW. Her own painting The Artist's Mother, first exhibited at the 1908 Kunstschau, further underscores Koller-Pinell's alignment with modern movements. The influence of the Secessionists is visible in the ornamentality of the flowers and the prominence of the black-and-white wicker chair—likely made by the furniture company Prag-Rudniker for whom Koloman Moser designed pieces. Her mother, Klara Pineles, depicted in a quotidian moment crocheting a textile, is not subsumed into a gesamtkunstwerk, but remains separate, retaining her autonomy and personhood [Figs. 35 and 36]. As with the WW women artists, their own subjectivity was of vital importance and they refused to be reduced to mere decoration.

Beyond their financial investment in the WW, the Waerndorfers also commissioned Hoffmann and Moser, in addition to the Scottish Art and Crafts designers Margaret Macdonald and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, to design and renovate their own home. As the scholar Elana Schapira has explained, "Waerndorfer wanted to establish his importance in the Viennese avant-garde scene by shaping a new artistic agenda, but he would also use modernist redesign to form a new identity as an assimilated Jew. . . . Hoffmann's design of his house interior was meant to express this appearance." As this impulse evinces, notions of self-fashioning through the WW and the embrace of a modernist aesthetic program were not the exclusive purview of women, despite their prominence in these spheres. In the case of Fritz, Schapira further posits that his "identification as a dandy was an act of defiance not only against the patriarchal bourgeois order of his family but also against notions of masculinity, since stereotypes of Jewish men as feminine and lacking self-respect was another form of antisemitism at the time."[27]

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire under Kaiser Franz Joseph I (who ruled 1848–1916), Jews lived with a relative sense of security. This fragile safety depended, however, on a complex negotiation of identity, juxtaposed with the reality of a growing and virulent antisemitic discourse,

Fig. 35: Broncia Koller-Pinell, *The Artist's Mother*, 1907. Oil on canvas. Artothek des Bundes, on permanent loan to Belvedere, Vienna

Fig. 36: Heinrich Schröder, *Portrait of Broncia Koller-Pinell*, 1907. Oil on canvas. Private Collection, Courtesy Kunsthandel Hieke, Vienna, Austria

which came to the foreground with the election of Karl Lueger as Vienna's mayor at the end of the nineteenth century and intensified in the aftermath of WWI.[28] As the scholar Alison Rose has described, "In all times of crisis and change, those invested in the traditional social order feared groups, such as Jews and women, who appeared to threaten the status quo. This widespread anxiety resulted in a dual crisis of masculinity and Jewish identity. The perceived Judaization and feminization of Viennese culture gave rise to hostility toward women and Jews."[29] According to Schapira, Jewish patrons' support of modern art and design "project[ed] their constructed identities and social integration and allow[ed] them to claim authority as producers of culture."[30] By integrating these designs into their lives as essential tools for fashioning an image of modernity, those who supported the WW styled themselves as progressive patrons of the arts and respectable members of society; in turn, with the financial support and social visibility of Vienna's intelligentsia, the WW gained cultural legitimization and prestige that galvanized its avant-garde sensibilities and contributed to its global renown.

BEYOND VIENNA

While the Wiener Werkstätte made a great impact on Vienna, its influence reached far beyond city limits thanks to its patrons, participation in exhibitions, and establishment of international outposts [Figs. 37–40]. Perhaps the most famous exhibition to showcase its work was the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. Hoffmann designed Austria's national pavilion, which showcased hundreds of WW products including textiles, glassware, and ceramics by Lotte Calm, Mizi Friedmann, Felice Rix, and Vally Wieselthier, among others. Several women won awards at the exhibition, including Rix who received a bronze medal.

The WW attempted to gain a stronger foothold abroad by opening branches in locations such as Marienbad, Karlsbad, Zurich, Berlin, and even New York despite ongoing financial struggles. The Jewish architect Josef Urban, who had

Fig. 37: Alice Fischer and Mea Angerer, Poster for the Kunstschau, 1927. Lithograph on paper. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Fig. 38: Advertisement for the 1920 Kunstschau exhibition designed by Fritzi Löw and Hedwig Schmidl. Gelatin silver print. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

immigrated to the United States in 1911, supported the establishment of the United States branch of the WW. The branch opened in autumn 1922 and sold WW products as well as works by Gustav Klimt, including the only set of prints he produced prior to his death in 1918.[31] Through Urban, WW designs also made their way to Hollywood, where he was a set designer for William Randolph Hearst and Marion Davies's Cosmopolitan Productions. Films such as *Enemies of Women* (1923), starring Alma Rubens, and *The Kiss* (1929), with Greta Garbo, featured WW ceramics by women artists, among them Susi Singer's life-size Neoclassical figure [Fig. 41] and Vally Wieselthier's cheeky table lamps. In this way, WW pieces moved beyond Vienna and into the American context, figuring into the modern discourses of the United States.[32]

Throughout its existence the WW received both lavish praise and harsh criticism, but survived the turmoil of World War I and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918. The business shuttered in 1932 due to ongoing financial instability exacerbated by the global fallout of the 1929 stock market crash (which also impacted the buying power of its clientele). However, echoes of the WW reverberated internationally in myriad ways. The *gesamtkunstwerk* was, for example, an important source of inspiration for Giacomo Balla, a key figure within the Italian Futurist movement, as well as for Serge Diaghilev in his Ballet Russes dance company. Following his visit to the WW in 1911, the Parisian couturier Paul Poiret established his design business Atelier Martine and regularly collaborated with the artist Raoul Dufy to develop his own textile designs inspired by the WW's self-contained design model. In 1913 Roger Fry launched the Omega Workshops, which were modeled after the WW, to bring avant-garde approaches to design in London. Wieselthier's previously discussed collaboration with the New York City–based studio Contempora is yet another example. Perhaps most famously in 1919, Walter Gropius founded the Staatliches Bauhaus school of art, which endeavored to create "the new structure of the future, which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in one unity," similarly organized with separate workshops for different media.

Fig. 39: Austrian "Noble Room," designed by Oskar Strnad for the Gewerbeschau in Munich with wall reliefs designed and fabricated by Hertha Bucher, Lotte Calm, Mathilde Flögl, Edith Hirschhorn, Hilda Jesser, Erna Kopriva, Dina Kuhn, Maria Likarz, Grete Neuwalder, Hedwig Schmidl, Susi Singer, and Vally Wieselthier, 1922. Gelatin silver print. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, purchase, 1954

Fig. 40: The "Long Hall" of the Austrian Pavilion at the "Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes," 1925. Gelatin silver print by Bruno Reiffenstein. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Just shy of one hundred years since the WW ceased production, the histories of its women artists and patrons, along with their impact on the course of modern art, design, and culture, are now beginning to receive their due. The decimation and destruction that followed the 1938 Anschluss wrought irreparable damage not only to the lives of these women, but to their legacies as cultural contributors.[33] This exhibition brings together a selection of works by many of the Jewish artists whose work for the Wiener Werkstätte, supported by Jewish patrons, reveals the monumental contributions and legacies of these women who probed at the constraints of modernist design languages and societal expectations by embracing opulence, experimentation, and plurality.

1 Led by the curator Anne-Katrin Rossberg at MAK – Museum of Applied Art, Vienna, the 2021 exhibition Women Artists of the Wiener Werkstätte offered this vital corrective, documenting women artists of many faiths and backgrounds. See Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Anne-Katrin Rossberg, and Elisabeth Schmuttermeier, eds., Women Artists of the Wiener Werkstätte, exh. cat. (MAK; Birkhäuser, 2020).

2 Julie Johnson, The Memory Factory: The Forgotten Women Artists of Vienna, 1900 (Purdue University Press, 2012), 366.

3 See Megan Brandow-Faller, The Female Secession: Art and the Decorative at the Viennese Women's Academy (Pennsylvania State University, 2020); Child Creativity and the Visual Arts: From Secessionist Vienna to Postwar America (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2025). For Anna Lesznai, see Rebecca Houze, "The Art and Design of Anna Lesznai: Adaptation and Transformation," in Designing Transformation: Jews and Cultural Identity in Central European Modernism, ed. Elana Shapira (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021); Julia Secklehner, "The Birth of Painting from the Spirit of the Gingerbread: Anna Lesznai's Hungarian Exotic in 1920s Vienna," in Erasures and Eradications in Modern Viennese Art, Architecture and Design, eds. Megan Brandow-Faller and Laura Morowitz (Routledge, 2023). For Mizi Friedmann's career after the WW, see Michelle Jackson-Beckett, "'Art for Use': Mitzi Friedmann-Otten and the Craft Scene of Postwar New York City," presented at the symposium Transatlantic Modernism, 1900-1945: Valley Wieselthier, the Wiener Werkstätte, and Design (CUNY Graduate Center, 2026).

4 See Emily D. Bilkski and Emily Braun, eds., Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation, exh. cat. (The Jewish Museum, 2005); Werner J. Schweiger, Wiener Werkstätte: Design in Vienna, 1903-1932 (Thames and Hudson, 1984), 15.

5 Catalogue of the 1st Art Exhibition of the Association of Austrian Visual Artists (Association of Austrian Visual Artists, 1898), 4.

6 "The ideal of the gesamtkunstwerk was integral to the new Secessionist style and represented a new Jewish acculturation project that further transformed Jewish and Viennese traditions. The irony is that the

new agenda originated in the theoretical work [from 1849] of a German composer [Richard Wagner] who rejected Jewish acculturation and had also coined the term 'Judaization.'" Elana Schapira, Style and Seduction: Jewish Patrons, Architecture, and Design in Fin de Siècle Vienna (Brandeis University Press, 2016), 58.

7 See Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, "The Work-Program of the Wiener Werkstätte" (1905), in this volume; Schapira, Style and Seduction, 139.

8 See Schweiger, Wiener Werkstatte; Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Matthias Boeckl, Rainald Franz, and Christian Witt-Dörring, eds., Josef Hoffmann, 1870–1956: Progress Through Beauty (Birkhäuser, 2021).

9 Thun-Hohenstein et al., Women Artists of the Wiener Werkstätte, 145.

10 Anne-Katrin Rossberg, "The Women Artists' Workshops," in Thun-Hohenstein et al., Women Artists of the Wiener Werkstätte, 143.

11 Vally Wieselthier, "Biography of Miss Vally Wieselthier," typed manuscript, Galerie St. Etienne, New York, 3.

12 See Lilli Hollein and Anne-Katrin Rosseberg, eds., Stars, Feathers and Tassels: Wiener Werkstätte Artist Felice Rix-Ueno (1893–1967) (MAK; Birkhäuser, 2023).

13 Thun-Hohenstein et al., Women Artists of the Wiener Werkstätte, 17.

14 Immense gratitude to Susanne Flodstrom (Grete's niece and a Holocaust survivor) and Janet Neuwalder (Susanne's niece) for sharing their stories and memories and to Megan Brandow-Faller for the introduction to this incredible family. Many thanks also to Elana Schapira to pointing me toward Ella Max's work.

15 See Harriet Anderson, Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna (Yale University Press, 1992).

16 "Kunstgewerblerin"; Anne-Katrin Rossberg, "Brought to Light: Art and Life of the Wiener Werkstätte Women," in Thun-Hohenstein et al., Women Artists of the Wiener Werkstätte, 19.

17 Katya Motyl, Embodied Histories: New Womanhood in Vienna, 1894–1934 (University of Chicago, 2024), 223–24.

18 See Rebecca Houze, Textiles, Fashion, and Design Reform in Austria-Hungary Before the First World War (Routledge, 2018).

19 Motyl, Embodied Histories, 87.

20 "unerhörte Pupperlwirtschaft"; Quotation by Oswald Haerdtl, cited in: Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber, Künstlerinnen in Österreich 1897–1938. Malerei, Plastik, Architektur, (Vienna, 1994), 95.

21 "Das Wiener Weh"; Adolf Loos, "ich-der bessere Österreicher" (1927), in Adolf Opel, ed., Kontroversen (Vienna, 1985), 10.

22 "Wiener Weiberkunstgewerbe"; See Das Tribunal, May 12, 1927, WW Archives, MAK, WWAN 85-1419-2.

23 Brandow-Faller, The Female Secession, 135.

24 Tragically, both Amalie Zuckerkandl (b. 1869, née Schlesinger) and her daughter Nora Zuckerkandl (b. 1898, mar. Stisany) were murdered during the Holocaust in 1942. Gustav Klimt had been working on a portrait of Amalie when he died in 1918.

25 Alessandra Comini, Egon Schiele's Portraits (University of California Press, 1974), 127.

26 Berta Zuckerkandl's review published in Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung, April 8, 1911, quoted

in Stella Rollig, Katharina Lovecky, Alexander Klee, eds., Broncia Koller-Pinell: An Artist and Her Network (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, 2024), 24.

27 Schapira, Style and Seduction, 126, 128.

28 See Marsha Rozenblit, The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity (State University of New York Press, 1983).

29 Alison Rose, Jewish Women in Fin de Siècle Vienna (University of Texas Press, 2008), 3.

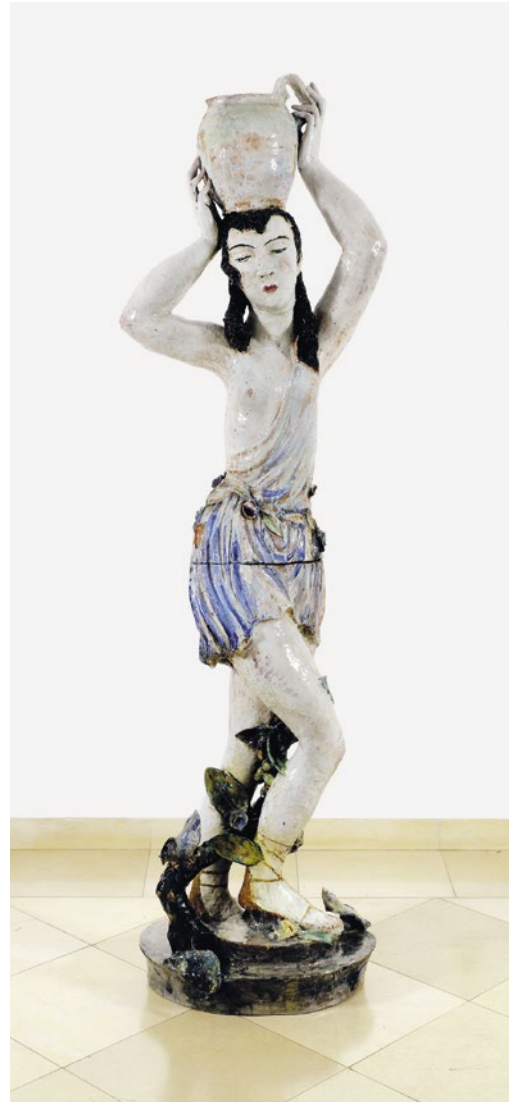
30 Schapira, Style and Seduction, 4.

31 Finances became tenuous, and the location closed in 1924.

32 See Janis Staggs, "The Wiener Werkstätte of America," in Wiener Werkstätte, 1903–1932: The Luxury of Beauty, eds. Christian Witt-Dörring and Janis Staggs (Prestel, 2017).

33 In what Elana Schapira describes as Hoffmann's betrayal, he "turned against his Jewish colleagues' progressive idea of Austrianism by endorsing a xenophobic Austro-Fascism in 1934 and later, in 1938, by adopting National-Socialist hate language and . . . discriminatory cultural practices." See "'Our Great Josef Hoffmann': Undoing the Austrian Profile of a Celebrated Architect" in Erasures and Eradications in Modern Viennese Art, Architecture and Design, eds. Megan Brandow Faller and Laura Morowitz (Routledge, 2023), 59.

Fig. 41: Susi Singer, Figure with jug, 1921–22. Wiener Werkstätte Model KO 5489. Glazed earthenware. Galerie bei der Albertina – Zetter, Vienna.



Overleaf, Fig. 42: Olga Freund, "Globus" (Globe) fabric, 1916–18. Printed plain-weave silk. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955


WIEN
WW
WIEN
Globus
4/6
MUSTER GESCHÜTZT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Published on the occasion of the exhibition Modernity and Opulence: Women of the Wiener Werkstätte, a cooperation between the Jewish Museum, New York, and MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna. Curated by Kristina Parsons, Leon Levy Associate Curator, the Jewish Museum, New York, with curatorial consultancy by Anne-Katrin Rossberg, MAK, Vienna.

The Jewish Museum, New York
July 17–November 15, 2026

Leadership support of the Jewish Museum's exhibitions is provided by the Knapp Family Foundation.

Major support of Modernity and Opulence: Women of the Wiener Werkstätte is provided by Jane and Reuben Leibowitz, The Silberstein Foundation, the Centennial Fund, the Horace W. Goldsmith Exhibitions Endowment, the Skirball Fund for American Jewish Life Exhibitions, and the Joan Rosenbaum Exhibition Endowment.

MAK

The related symposium "Transatlantic Modernism, 1900–1945: Vally Wieselthier, the Wiener Werkstätte, and Design" took place on February 10, 2026, at the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center, CUNY Graduate Center, New York. A recording of the proceedings is available on YouTube.

Special thanks to Serena Feingold, Curatorial Assistant.

Jewish Museum

1109 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10128
TheJewishMuseum.org

The Jewish Museum, New York:
Joanna Ahlberg, Editorial Director
Amelia Kutschbach, Editor
Rebecca Merriman, Rights and Reproductions Coordinator
Design: Wolfe Hall, London
Print: Shapco Printing, Minneapolis

Cover
Klara Posnanski, "Preblau" fabric, 1928. Printed plain-weave silk. MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, donation, 1955

Jewish Museum