

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.

The exhibition *Modernity and Opulence: Women of the Wiener Werkstätte* is 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.

Curator

Kristina Parsons,
Leon Levy Associate Curator

Exhibition Design

Chelsea Garunay

Exhibition Graphic Design

June Yoon

Curatorial Assistant

Serena Feingold

Printing and Installation

Full Point Graphics

Brooklyn PrintWorks

Fabrication

LEERFORM

South Side Design and Build

Lighting

Clint Ross Coller

The Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops) was an innovative multidisciplinary collective active in Vienna between 1903 and 1932. Its artists created modernist designs for everyday living that embraced functional forms, sophisticated aesthetics, and luxurious craftsmanship. Responding to nineteenth-century industrialization, the Wiener Werkstätte applied its avant-garde sensibilities to everything from furniture, home goods, and decor to clothing, accessories, and postcards, following in the footsteps of international Arts and Crafts movements. Through these works, the Wiener Werkstätte sought to bring art into every aspect of life by placing equal importance on fine arts and applied (decorative) arts.

Histories of the Wiener Werkstätte 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 Wiener Werkstätte benefited increasingly from the contributions of women artists. They expanded the collective's modernist principles, which were initially rooted in uniformity and restrained ornamentation, by incorporating vibrant decorative approaches that drew from diverse sources and fueled new feminist sensibilities. Recent scholarship has identified nearly two hundred women artists known to have worked for the Wiener Werkstätte—approximately one-quarter of these women were of Jewish faith or heritage or had Jewish families.

Modernity and Opulence: Women of the Wiener Werkstätte highlights artists whose experiments with color, pattern, and form introduced expressivity, sensuality, and whimsy to the collective's designs. More than thirty women are represented here, with special emphasis placed on Vally Wieselthier and Felice Rix, who had a lasting influence on ceramics and textile design, respectively. This exhibition also meaningfully reintroduces many once-known artists about whom little has been recovered to date, serving as a call for future exploration.

The patronage of prominent women such as Adele Bloch-Bauer and Berta Zuckerkandl was crucial to the success of the Wiener Werkstätte. Their endorsement helped the business cultivate an upper-class clientele, including a circle of progressive Jewish intellectuals, who advanced the Wiener Werkstätte's reformist ideals by conspicuously integrating its products into their lives.

In a period of burgeoning opportunities for women and a sharp rise in antisemitism, these women—artists and patrons alike—refused to conform to conventional expectations, using their creative output and steadfast support to challenge cultural norms and remake modernity in their own image.

Kristina Parsons

Leon Levy Associate Curator

FREE DIGITAL GUIDE

Learn more and discover rich stories from different voices and perspectives.

Use Jewish Museum Visitor WiFi



Scan the QR code to access the guides on Bloomberg Connects

Look for these symbols in the galleries to explore



Insights from the exhibition curator Kristina Parsons and art and design historians Megan Brandow-Faller, Anne-Katrin Rossberg, and Elana Shapira



Audio Descriptions that translate the visual into spoken word, designed for individuals who are blind or have low vision

Devices and complimentary headphones are also available for loan at the admissions desk, except on Saturdays and select Jewish holidays.

Digital guides supported by



The works in *Modernity and Opulence: Women of the Wiener Werkstätte* were made by the Wiener Werkstätte unless otherwise stated. Additional biographical information about the artists, such as their legal and married names, are included in the printed brochure that accompanies the exhibition.

Nonflash, noncommercial photography for personal use is permitted in this exhibition.

Follow @TheJewishMuseum and share photos using #JewishMuseumNYC.