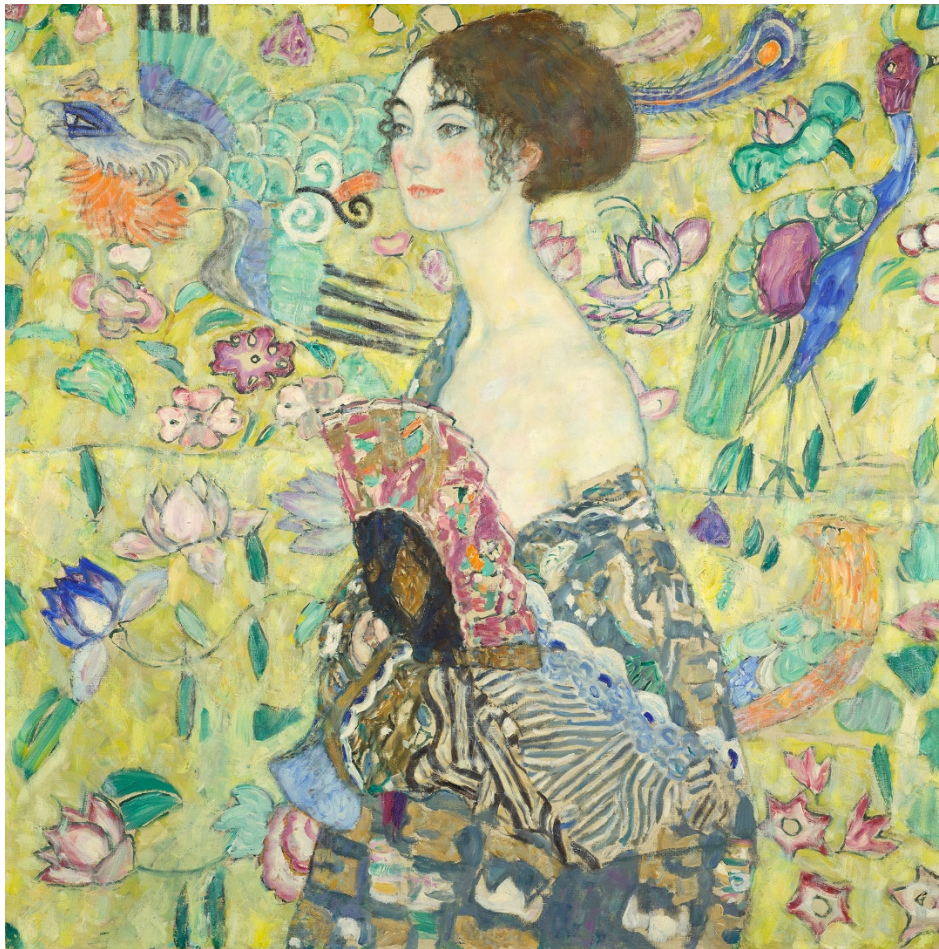


LADY WITH FAN

GUSTAV KLIMT AND EAST ASIAN ART

Upper Belvedere

7 October 2021 to 13 February 2022



Gustav Klimt, *Lady with Fan*, 1917-18

On loan from private collection © Belvedere, Vienna, Photo: Markus Guschelbauer

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Who was the beauty in *Lady with Fan*? What significance is there to reference of East Asia? Klimt was deeply fascinated with Asian art throughout his life, as shown by his nearly completed painting *Lady with Fan*. For the first time in more than a century, the work is on display in Vienna. Following a special exhibition dedicated to the portrait, the Belvedere will host a second presentation that explores Klimt's stylistic influences from China, Japan, and India.

CEO Stella Rollig says: „*Gustav Klimt's work Lady with Fan is not only an outstanding example of his late style but also demonstrates his broad understanding of art. This presentation demonstrates Klimt's openness to different cultures.*“

Lady with Fan was created at the end of 1917. When Klimt suffered a stroke – from which he never recovered – on 11 January 1918, the painting was almost complete. The unidentified model, with her head held high, her shoulders exposed, her bare bosom covered by a fan, and a confident look in her eyes, plays a seductive game.

With his portraits of women and idyllic landscapes, Klimt sought to offer a paradigm of harmony and love in contrast to reality's gloom – similarly, Chinese dresses and decorations are an offering of rapprochement between cultures. Gustav Klimt began studying East Asian art as early as the 1890s, initially primarily interested in Japanese art. Later, he turned to Chinese, Korean, and sometimes even Persian or Indian styles. From these countries, the artist adopted decorative elements as well as compositional strategies; for example, studying typical color schemes and applying them to his pictures.

Markus Fellingner, curator of the exhibition, notes: „*Klimt's work is clearly influenced by East Asian art – an intriguing element. Like a poetic quotation, he openly placed figures and decorations from East Asian art objects into his paintings. Among the defining characteristics of his late style was the overpowering intensity of color he embraced from these icons.*“

Lady with Fan was significantly influenced by Chinese and Japanese art, in particular. Wrapped in a Chinese robe, the model flirtatiously hides behind a decorated fan. The yellow wallpaper in the background features several characteristic motifs: the Chinese phoenix, the crane, the golden pheasant, and the lotus flower, all ubiquitous symbols of good fortune in East Asian art. Another reference, specifically to Japanese painting, is the lady with a fan herself: *Bijin-ga*, or portraits of famous beauties (courtesans and geishas) done in the Japanese woodblock technique (*ukiyo-e*), were part of Klimt's extensive collection of Asian art objects. Unfortunately, only a few of these prints have survived; additional examples appear in Moriz Nähr's photograph of Klimt's studio vestibule. The background in *Lady with Fan* was perhaps inspired by *Snow*, Utagawa Kunitaru's colored woodcut.

This exhibition includes some of Klimt's Asian art objects alongside Chinese porcelain, tiles, and embroidery to highlight the similarities between his work and East Asian arts and crafts.

Like Schiele, Kokoschka, and other artists from his circle, Klimt was a member of the Vienna Institute for Cultural Research. Founded in 1915, the institution advocated a pacifist, egalitarian world culture and rejected the idea of the cultural superiority of the West, a notion widespread at the time. Klimt's paintings embody this belief: European and Asian pictorial traditions are brought together in equal measure to form a harmonious symbiosis.

BIOGRAPHY

- 1862 Gustav Klimt is born on 14 July in Baumgarten bei Wien (now in Vienna's 14th district), the first son of the self-employed engraver, Ernst Klimt senior.
- 1876-83 Klimt studies at the Vienna School of Applied Arts. Around 1880, he starts collaborating with his younger brother Ernst and Franz Matsch and together they complete major commissions until 1892. First independent commissions for wall and ceiling paintings as well as for Martin Gerlach's *Allegories and Emblems*.
- 1886-88 Ceiling paintings in the staircase of the Burgtheater
- 1890-91 Paintings for the spandrels in the staircase of the Kunsthistorisches Museum
- 1892 Death of Klimt's father and brother Ernst; Klimt is plunged into a crisis lasting several years
- 1894 Commission for the ceiling paintings in the Great Hall at the University of Vienna (Faculty Paintings), shared with Franz Matsch; thereafter Klimt's cooperation with Matsch gradually winds down
- 1897 Klimt is a founder member and the first president of the Vienna Secession (Vereinigung bildender Künstler Wiens, Secession). Klimt develops into an uncompromising avant-garde artist.
- 1898 Klimt first spends part of the summer in the Salzkammergut with the family of his close friend Emilie Flöge.
- 1899 Birth of Klimt's first children Gustav Ucicky and Gustav Zimmermann
- 1900 Start of the controversies about the Faculty Paintings. Gold medal at the Paris World's Fair for the Faculty Painting *Philosophy*. Klimt first experiments with gold leaf in his painting *Judith*, which he completes in 1901.
- 1902 Beethoven Exhibition at the Secession. In the previous year, Klimt paints the *Beethoven Frieze* for this show.

- 1905 The Klimt Group leaves the Secession following long disputes.
- 1908 The Klimt Group organizes the Kunstschau exhibition. Klimt first shows *The Kiss*, which the Austrian state purchases for the Moderne Galerie at the Belvedere.
- 1909 The Klimt Group organizes the International Kunstschau. A long trip to Paris, Madrid, and Toledo. Klimt moves away from using metal leaf in his paintings and, in subsequent years, develops the vibrant style that characterizes his late work.
- 1911 Completion of Klimt's mosaic frieze for Palais Stoclet in Brussels. Klimt moves into his secluded garden studio in Feldmühlgasse 11 in Vienna's district of Hietzing. He withdraws more and more from public life. Klimt now only exhibits his paintings abroad.
- 1914 Start of World War I
- 1918 On 11 January, Klimt has a stroke. He catches pneumonia and dies on 6 February.

EXHIBITION PROGRAM

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<https://www.belvedere.at/en/on-request-groups>

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title	LADY WITH FAN. GUSTAV KLIMT AND EAST ASIAN ART
Exhibition Duration	7 October 2021 to 13 February 2022
Exhibition Location	Upper Belvedere
Works	12 Original Objects 12 Facsimiles and Reproductions
Curator	Markus Fellingner
Exhibition Management	Werner Sommer, Monica Strinu
Contact	Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-0 www.belvedere.at
Art Education	Belvedere Art Education T + 43 1 795 57-134 M public@belvedere.at
Opening Hours	Daily 10am to 6pm
Regular Admission	€ 18 (Upper Belvedere)
Press Contact	Belvedere Public Relations Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-177 M press@belvedere.at

Further information and exhibition press photos are available to download at belvedere.at/en/press.

#LadyWithFan

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