

## Gustav Klimt Vienna – Japan 1900

Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (23 April – 10 July 2019)

Toyota Municipal Museum of Art (23 July 2019 – 14 October 2019)



Gustav Klimt, Judith, 1901

Photo: Johannes Stoll © Belvedere, Wien

## **Gustav Klimt.**

### **Vienna and Japan 1900**

Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Japan

April 23 to July 10, 2019

Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Japan

July 23 to October 14, 2019

In collaboration with the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, and Japan's leading newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, the Belvedere is presenting the most extensive Klimt exhibition in Japan in decades. Over 115 objects including ten Klimt paintings from the Belvedere Collection and a number of prominent works from across the globe enrich this impressive show, which is being held to mark the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Austria and Japan.

Stella Rollig, Artistic Director and CEO of the Belvedere, explains, "*Gustav Klimt adopted many stylistic elements from Japanese art and crafts, thus expressing his respect for this culture. For that reason, his works are particularly suitable for an intercultural exchange between Austria and Japan. In this comprehensive exhibition, it has been possible to show a compilation of his works that has never before been seen in Japan.*"

The exhibition was curated and designed by Belvedere curator Markus Fellingner, who focused on two key aspects: the impact of the artist's personality on his work and his references to Japanese art. "*Like almost no other artist, Gustav Klimt's work allows us to draw conclusions about his personality; he even points this out himself. For me, this was the inspiration to track down traces and evidence of Klimt's private and spiritual life in his complex and detailed works,*" says Fellingner.

The exhibition in Tokyo and Toyota visualizes the fact that many of Klimt's works can be understood as expressions of personal crisis, anxiety, and desire. For the first time, such an exhibition comprehensively deciphers the thought cosmos behind Klimt's masterpieces, thereby focusing on the symbolism behind Klimt's work. The exhibition seeks to illustrate the extent to which this symbolism can be interpreted as a representation of the relationships of his works with his life and his social environment. In addition to the artist's significant paintings, this is also substantiated by letters and personal objects.

### **Klimt and Japan**

A second focus of the exhibition is Klimt's relationship to Japan, which repeatedly left its mark on his work. Markus Fellingner: "*Klimt had a proven appreciation for Japanese art and used it as a rich source of inspiration. His use of real gold became prominent in art history and was strongly influenced by Japanese painting and crafts.*" The exhibition shows how Japan's art and culture, then considered alien to Europe, was received within the cosmos of Viennese Modernism and manifested itself, for example, in Klimt's paintings.

## Exhibition Layout

At the Metropolitan Museum in Tokyo, the exhibition spans three floors. Gustav Klimt's career is illustrated in chronological order, starting with Klimt's early work, his roots, and his family. One section highlights his connection to Hans Makart and his work as a member of the Künstler-Compagnie [Company of Artists], another is devoted to paintings for the theater as well as stage and costume design. The first floor features the Beethoven frieze (a copy in original size) and key works from Klimt's Golden Phase, including *Judith* from the Belvedere, as well as a number of landscape paintings. The second floor is dedicated to Klimt's celebrated portraits of women. The final section explores the "Circle of Life" theme featuring images touching on sexuality, pregnancy, childhood, and death.

The Belvedere will be sending valuable masterpieces by Gustav Klimt and his contemporaries to Japan. Among them are *Judith*, *Mother with Two Children (Family)*, and *The Kammer Castle on Lake Attersee III* by Klimt. The following Klimt highlights will be on view as well: *Nuda Veritas* (Theater Museum, Vienna), *The Three Ages of Woman* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome), *Friends I (The Sisters)* (Klimt Foundation, Vienna), *Portrait of Helene Klimt* (Private Collection), *Flowering Meadow with Schoberstein* (Kunsthaus Zug, Kamm Collection Foundation), *Baby* (National Gallery Washington), and *Portrait of Mäda Primavesi* (Toyota Municipal Museum of Art).

The presentations in Tokyo and Toyota differ only slightly from one another: a total of 124 objects will be shown over the duration of the exhibition; at the opening show in Tokyo, 115 objects will be on view.

Norie Nishizaki (Curator, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art):

"The long-cherished desire of Toyota Municipal Museum of Art to host the exhibition of Klimt has come true – we have stated art works of Wiener Moderne as one of our core collections since we opened the museum. We would like to send our sincere gratitude to Österreichische Galerie Belvedere to support us realizing the exhibition just before celebrating 25th anniversary of opening our museum. Along with that, we wish to continue this great cooperative relationship."

Akiko Kobayashi (Curator, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum):

"Gorgeous and delicate works by Klimt have great appeal in Japan as well. The exhibition which became possible thanks to the full cooperation of Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, will give people a precious opportunity to appreciate many of splendid works by Klimt. It will mark a historic milestone as the incident introducing works by Klimt owned in several countries as well as the latest research about his works."

Nobuyuki Senzoku (Prof. emeritus Seijo University and Director of Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum):

“The interest in Klimt in Japan started in the final years of 1980s when the monumental exhibition WIEN UM 1900: KLIMT, SCHIELE UND IHRE ZEIT was shown in Tokyo. It has much to do with the decorative, crafts-like effect and beauty of his art. Both are also characteristics of Japanese art.”

## CURATORIAL TEAM

Markus Fellingner, curator, Belvedere

Akiko Kobayashi, curator, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art

Norie Nishizaki, curator, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art

Nobuyuki Senzoku, Prof. emeritus, Seijo University and Director, Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum

Dettmar Westhoff, exhibition coordinator