



KOLOMAN MOSER

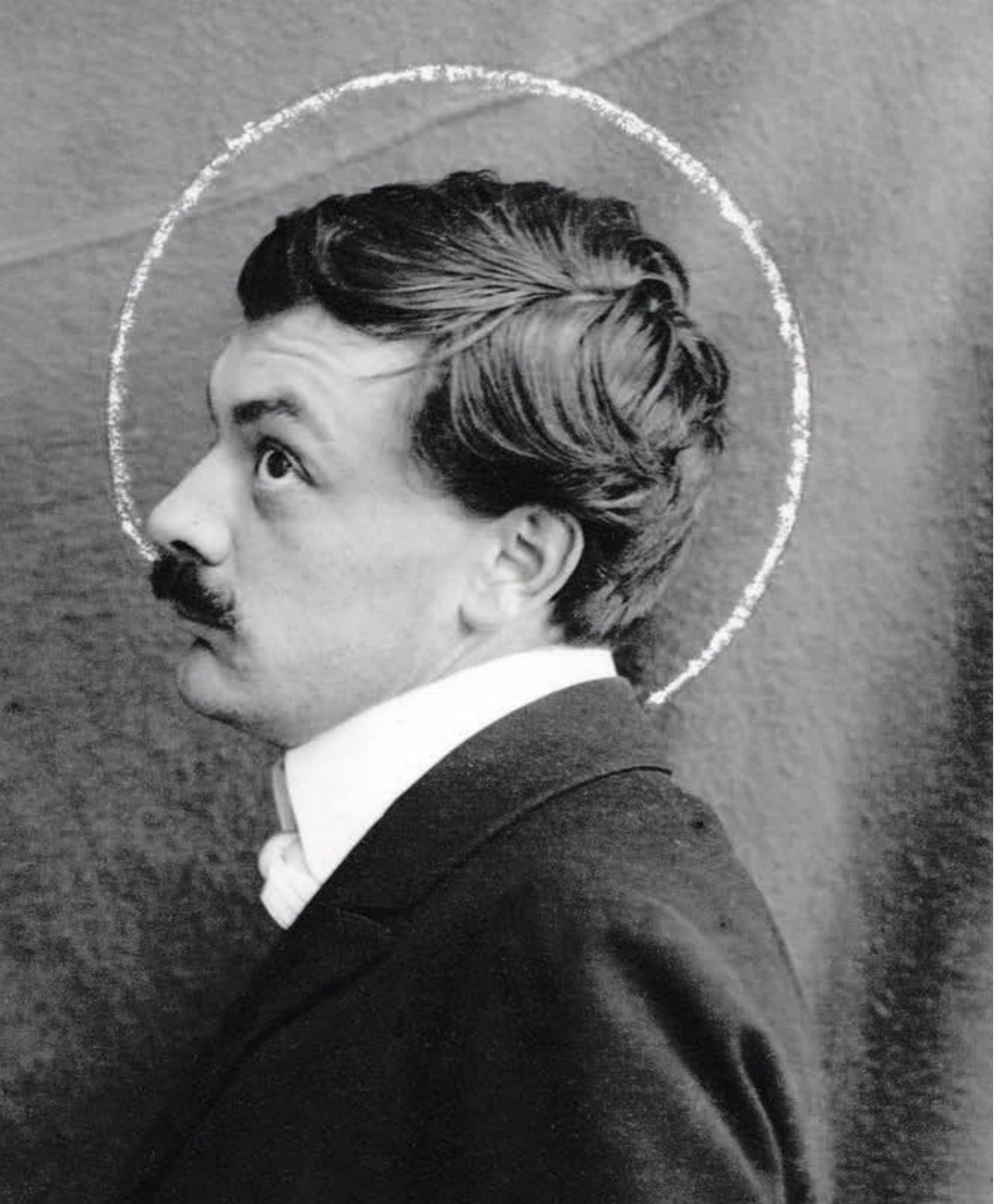
DESIGNING
MODERN VIENNA
1897-1907



PRESTEL

**NEUE
GALERIE**
MUSEUM FOR GERMAN
AND AUSTRIAN ART
NEW YORK

KOLOMAN MOSER



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DESIGNING MODERN VIENNA 1897–1907

Edited by Christian Witt-Döring

With preface by Ronald S. Lauder,
foreword by Renée Price,
and contributions by Rainald Franz, Ernst Ploil, Elisabeth Schmuttermeier, Janis Staggs, Angela Völker,
and Christian Witt-Döring

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MUNICH • LONDON • NEW YORK

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PREFACE

As a graphic artist, designer, and one of the foremost proponents of the Vienna Secession movement, Koloman Moser helped define the art of his time. Today, it is impossible to imagine Vienna 1900 without the influence of Moser.

The sheer range of his work is astonishing. How could one man be gifted in so many areas? His work in architecture, furniture, jewelry, graphics, and tapestries helped set a new standard for modern design. Moser reacted against the historicizing decadence of his turn-of-the-century Viennese surroundings, and drew instead upon the clean lines and clarified motifs of classical Greek and Roman art and architecture.

If he had done nothing besides co-found the Wiener Werkstätte in 1903 with Josef Hoffmann, Moser would still be considered a major artistic force. The studios and artisans of the Wiener Werkstätte produced some of the most aesthetically appealing and functionally designed objects ever created. Moser was also one of the designers for the influential art journal of that group, *Ver Sacrum*. Then in 1904, Moser created the mosaic and glass windows for the Church am Steinhof in Vienna. This native son of Vienna was truly instrumental in defining the art of that city. We are proud to show his work at the Neue Galerie.

We are also thrilled to collaborate with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Led for many years by the inimitable Peter Marzio, the museum has recently appointed Gary Tinterow as Director of that august institution. The Neue Galerie is pleased to work with this premier museum, and we trust that there will be many future collaborations between our institutions in the years ahead.

This exhibition represents a great opportunity for visitors to experience the special sensitivity to color, texture, and material that defined Moser's work. We all stand to benefit enormously from the encounter.

Ronald S. Lauder
President, Neue Galerie New York

FOREWORD

Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann are the two great design innovators associated with Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century. As co-founders of the Wiener Werkstätte, they helped define the modern design aesthetic.

With this exhibition, we present the first American museum show devoted entirely to Koloman Moser. Often overshadowed by the more famous Hoffmann, Moser will be a discovery for many. His designs span an enormous range, including furniture, interior design, stained-glass windows, lighting, carpets, wallpaper, tableware in silver, glass, and ceramics, textiles, couture, costumes, jewelry, and graphic design such as posters, bank notes, and postage stamps. In his later years, Moser devoted considerable energy to working as a painter. With this exhibition we take a more defined path, and focus primarily on his work in the decorative arts.

Our curator for the exhibition, Christian Witt-Döring, is one of the leading experts in this field. He has been involved with the Neue Galerie since its inception, and it was with his guidance that the museum developed its fine collection of decorative arts. He has organized numerous memorable exhibitions at the Neue Galerie, including “Dagobert Peche and the Wiener Werkstätte” in 2002, “Viennese Silver: Modern Design 1780–1918” in 2003, and in 2006 “Josef Hoffmann: Interiors 1902–1913,” a painstaking reconstruction of four complete rooms designed by Hoffmann. All are distinguished both by scholarly rigor and creative exuberance.

A project such as this one is not merely an art historical endeavor, but a testimony to several long, nurturing friendships. None of our decorative arts exhibitions would have been possible without Ernst Ploil, our esteemed board member, and Stefan and Paul Asenbaum. We are deeply indebted to them for their continued support, knowledge, and enthusiasm for the mission of the Neue Galerie. I wish to express our deepest gratitude to museums and private individuals that have lent work to the Koloman Moser show, especially the Backhausen Archive, MAK, Leopold Museum, Belvedere, and Wien Museum (all in Vienna), Yves Macaux, Brussels, and Richard Grubman and Caroline Mortimer, Boston, for their encouraging support of our exhibition program.

We are most appreciative for the ongoing and fruitful collaboration between Dr. Witt-Döring and Chicago-based architect John Vinci, who designed this installation. It is always a pleasure to witness them refine an exhibition concept in tandem, sometimes 5,000 miles apart, while always producing an outstanding final result.

All of the decorative arts exhibitions at the Neue Galerie are accompanied by elegant catalogues marked by stimulating scholarly and visual content. Richard Pandiscio and Bill Loccisano of Pandiscio Co. have once again worked their aesthetic magic and created an extraordinary design for the exhibition catalogue.

I wish to thank my esteemed colleague Gary Tinterow, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Cindi Strauss, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Decorative Arts and Design, for their embrace of the exhibition concept. We are delighted to partner with this distinguished Texas institution for the first time and to extend the reach of the Koloman Moser show.

I am also grateful to my colleagues at the Neue Galerie, including Scott Gutterman, deputy director; Janis Staggs, associate curator; Sefa Saglam, registrar and director of exhibitions; Michael Voss, preparator; and Liesbet van Leemput, graphics manager, for their dedicated efforts on behalf of this exhibition.

Last but not least, my heartfelt thanks go to Ronald S. Lauder, the steadfast President of the Neue Galerie and, hands down, one of the most passionate fans of the Viennese decorative arts this side of the Atlantic.

Renée Price
Director, Neue Galerie New York

INTRODUCTION

Koloman Moser (1868–1918) was one of the leading artists of the Viennese artistic spring in the years around 1900. He left behind an extensive oeuvre that covered the disciplines of painting and the graphic arts, the applied arts, interior design, and set design. This exhibition is dedicated exclusively to his influence in the field of the applied arts and interior design. It exemplifies the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or “total work of art,” promoted by the Vienna Secession. The concept arose from the teachings of William Morris, from the conviction that there was no difference between the high (fine) arts and the low (applied) arts. This concept was the ideological cornerstone of the Arts and Crafts movement. Among other things, it called for artistic design and artisanal execution of everyday objects, which were elevated to the status of works of art. It was believed they could create a better world, which would counteract the undesirable consequences of the Industrial Revolution.

Koloman Moser's artistic home was the Vienna Secession, of which he became a founding member in 1897, along with Gustav Klimt, Josef Maria Olbrich, and Josef Hoffmann. Within that framework, he developed in conjunction with Olbrich and Hoffmann the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* that was ultimately realized in the art of Viennese interior design. Whereas Olbrich and Hoffmann were trained architects, Moser was educated as a painter at the Akademie der bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts) in Vienna and at the Kunstgewerbeschule des Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie (School of Applied Arts of the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry) from 1886 to 1895. His first artistic works were thus in the media of painting and the graphic arts. Under the influence of Klimt, his form of artistic expression, which was still rooted in historicism, very quickly transformed into a planar-linear style. From that he developed the planar art typical of Vienna, which would set the tone for his inquiries into all of the spheres of artistic design. Within the framework of the search for an autonomous modern style, he developed a concept for modern ornament, which, among other things, would later provoke Adolf Loos's sharp criticism of the Secession movement. The first mature examples of this early planar art were realized by Moser not only for the façade of the new building for the Viennese Secession in 1898 but also for its public presentation, which had to satisfy the totalizing design ambitions of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. For example, the design for the Secession letterhead and the publication of an art journal as the official organ of the Secession, *Ver Sacrum*, can be traced back to Moser's initiative.¹ The first works in the field of the applied arts were, logically, designs for fabrics and carpets that were manufactured by the Backhausen company.

The Secession was not just Moser's artistic homeland; its circle of members and patrons also provided key friendships in his life. It smoothed his path into the circles of Vienna's upper-middle-class society, from which he also recruited clients. He

was himself from Vienna's lower middle class—his father was an administrator at the Theresianische Akademie (a preparatory school)—who married Editha Mautner von Markhof in 1905, the daughter of a brewery owner and initially his student at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Applied Arts) in Vienna. Moser had been appointed professor there in 1899, together with Hoffmann, in order to help the new artistic ideas achieve their breakthrough. His teaching activity not only resulted in a stylistic reorientation for his students but also a reorientation of the curriculum. Rather than the usual practice of historicism—basing the students' education on copying historical models—Moser and Hoffmann insisted on a practical training for students in workshops specific to a material. One of the first workshops established was the pottery workshop, which produced several of the most innovative works of the new Viennese ceramics. Very probably he found inspiration to create this teaching workshop on a journey in April 1899 to the Fachschule für die Tonwarenindustrie (Technical School for the Ceramics Industry) in Znaim (now Znojmo). From the time of his appointment to the Kunstgewerbeschule, Moser had devoted himself to the design of three-dimensional objects in glass and ceramics for the first time, as well as furniture. Without the teaching activity of Moser and Hoffmann, the new Viennese style would never have achieved the rapid spread and acceptance it did. Its students helped convey it to the glass, ceramics, textiles, furniture, and bentwood industries of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. For the ceramics industry, there was even a special trademark—"Schule Prof. Kolo Moser"—to be applied beneath the glaze. Students from this circle founded Wiener Kunst im Hause (Viennese Art in the Home) in 1901, which set itself the task of producing its own artistic designs for all aspects of home furnishings.

The institution with which Moser is most closely associated is the Wiener Werkstätte. He cofounded it with Josef Hoffmann and the textile industrialist and unreserved admirer of the Secession, Fritz Waerndorfer, in 1903. The foundation of this productive cooperative of applied artists was the final logical step in the unrestricted realization of their ideas of a total *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Not coincidentally, it was taken only after the introduction of a practically oriented training at the Kunstgewerbeschule and foundation of Kunst im Hause. Whereas the former united design and execution in one place, but was not integrated into actual economic life, Wiener Kunst im Hause united only design and distribution. With the Wiener Werkstätte, they created an infrastructure that permitted them to execute their designs in an unmediated way, in direct contact with the artisans and their clients, in a protected creative and experimental atmosphere. The designs from the company's first years under the artistic direction of Moser and Hoffmann are distinguished by an extremely geometric and abstract formal idiom. As he had been earlier at the Secession, Moser was responsible for the graphic look of the company and designed, among other things, the trademark and the monogram of the Wiener Werkstätte. In 1905, two years after the founding of the Wiener Werkstätte, the so-called Klimt Group, which included Moser and Hoffmann, resigned from the Secession. They no longer wished to help support the naturalistic tendencies of the majority of the remaining members and no longer found support for their pursuit of the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. As a result the Secession lost its leading role in the Viennese art scene. From that point forward, the unity of the arts was pursued by Moser and Hoffmann, with the occasional support of Klimt, in their new home at the Wiener Werkstätte. Finally, in 1907 Moser left the Wiener Werkstätte and from then on devoted himself almost exclusively to painting again.

Three institutions were crucial to Moser's life path. His association with them was connected with different tasks and opportunities for him in each case. At the same time, they stand for very specific periods in his artistic development. For that reason, it seemed obvious to use them as the conceptual backbone of the exhibition and make one the theme of each of the three available exhibition spaces. As a founding member of the Secession, he was initially influenced by the Belgian and French curvilinear Art Nouveau and by the British Arts and Crafts movement, for which he then developed his specific version of curvilinear Viennese planar art. With his appointment as professor of the class in decorative drawing and painting at the Kunstgewerbeschule, whose goal was to disseminate officially an autonomous modern Viennese style, his formal idiom transformed

under his decisive experiences with the works of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, moving from a curvilinear form of expression to a geometric and abstract one. Finally, within the framework of the Wiener Werkstätte, he produced, among other things, his most radical and mature works of geometric abstraction.

Christian Witt-Döring

Translated from the German by Steven Lindberg

1 Oskar Pausch, *Gründung und Baugeschichte der Wiener Secession* (Vienna: Österreichischer Kunst- und Kulturverlag, 2006), 140.

1

GRAPHIC ART

Rainald Franz

The orientation around the plane and line found in Viennese art around 1900 was not conceived and developed solely for the art criticism essay and illustration.¹ Crucial impulses also came from the reorientation of artistic training around the drawing. The Akademie der bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts) in Vienna and the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Applied Arts), founded in 1867, deliberately compelled, through its selection of teachers beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, training for artists who were determined to execute *Gesamtkunstwerke* in architecture and decorative paintings programs on the newly created Ringstrasse.² The basis for this was increased value placed on training in drawing, which led to a boom in the graphic arts in Austria. The painters of the Ringstrasse period, such as Franz von Matsch (1861–1942), were the teachers of the generation of the founders of the Secession. With the appointment of Felician von Myrbach (1853–1940) as director of the Kunstgewerbeschule in 1899, the professor of illustration, who had worked as a book designer in Paris for many years, was assigned responsibility for running the institution. Myrbach appointed a group of founding Secessionists as new teachers, including Koloman Moser, a graduate of the institution. Moser developed from the graphic arts his interpretation of the new style: the plane and the line establish what is then supposed to lead to the design for the space. The formal explosion of artistic creativity within the Secession was, in Moser's case, the result of a solid artistic training and his activity as a commercial graphic artist, which amounted to ten years of working toward completely new forms of artistic design. By way of the Künstlerhaus, the Siebner-Club, and the Secession, Moser developed his own graphic identity; its evolution would culminate in the corporate design for the Wiener Werkstätte in collaboration with Josef Hoffmann. In a lecture in 1911, Josef Hoffmann remarked: "It was the painter Moser, who thanks to his activity as an illustrator knew more about the outside world and from then on had the greatest influence over us. His talent for planar art and every kind of craft invention seemed fabulous to us."³

1. Koloman Moser, cover of the Thirteenth Vienna Secession catalogue, 1902

Printed paper

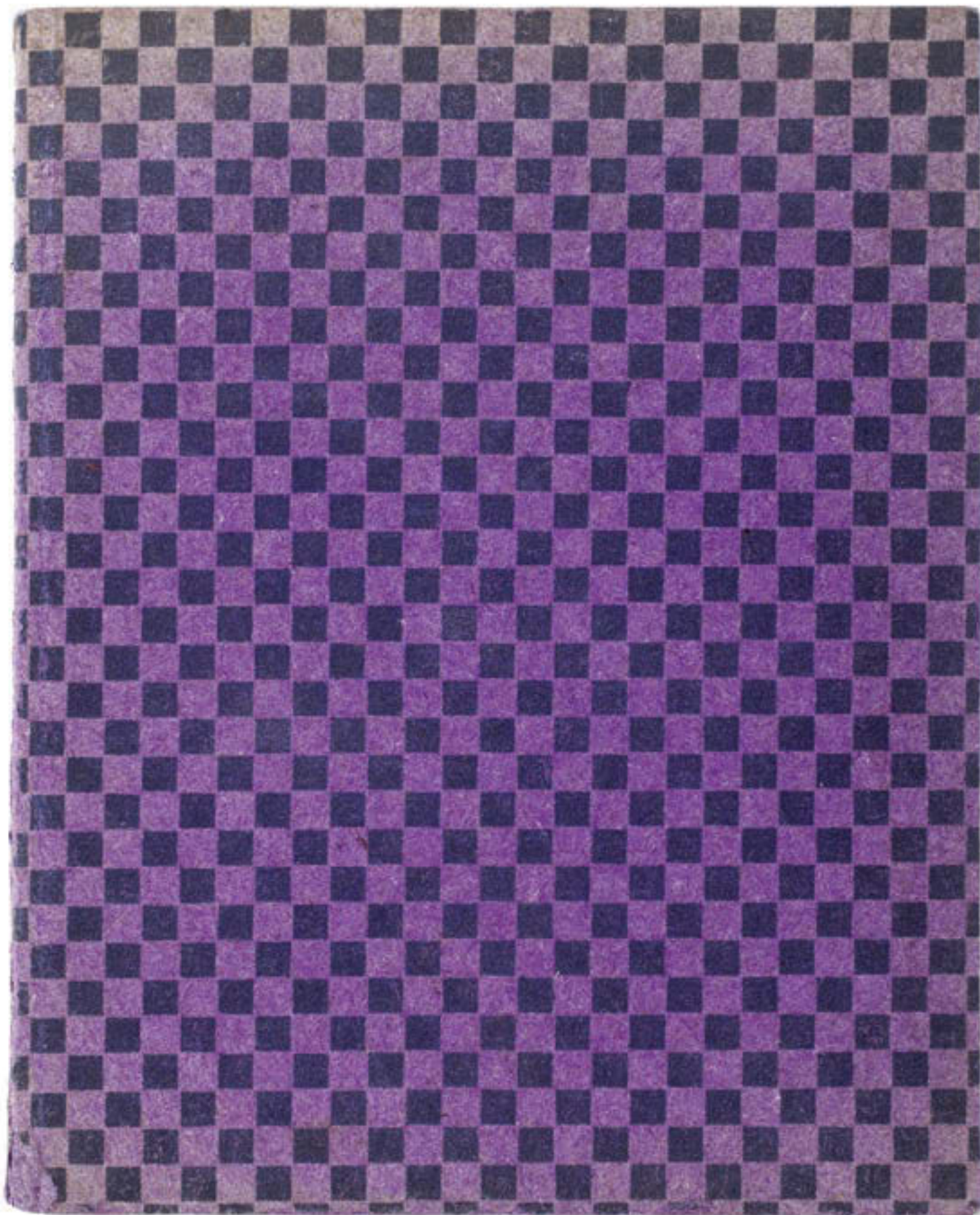
Neue Galerie New York

Photo: Hulya Kolabas, New York

1 Rainald Franz, "Linear Art as the Dictates of the Time: The Graphic Work of the Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs—Secession and Its Role," in *The Vienna Secession, 1898–1918*, Miyagi Museum of Art, Sendai, Japan, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Tokyo Shimbun, 2001), 227–30.

2 On the parallels to Gustav Klimt's training and drawing as a modernist means, see Werner J. Schweiger, *Aufbruch und Erfüllung: Gebrauchsgraphik der Wiener Moderne, 1897–1918* (Munich: Brandstätter, 1988).

3 Josef Hoffmann, "Meine Arbeit, Vortrag vom 22. Februar, 1911," ed. Berta Zuckerkandl, *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* 32, no. 9868 (1911), reprinted in Eduard Sekler, *Josef Hoffmann: Das architektonische Werk; Monographie und Werkverzeichnis* (Salzburg: Residenz, 1982), 487.





2. Koloman Moser, male nude, figure study, ca. 1890

Pencil and black chalk on paper
 IMAGNO/Austrian Archives

Moser's professors were Franz Rumpler, Christian Griepenkerl at the Allgemeine Malerschule (General School of Painting) until 1890, and Mathias von Trenkwald at the Spezialschule für Historienmalerei (Special School for History Painting) until 1892, from whom he learned drawing and painting beginning in 1885—"naturally according to the academic style, which dominated completely at the time," as he described it himself in "Mein Werdegang" (My Career) of 1916.⁴ Nudes and nature studies from his period at the academy survive, and they document Moser's mastery of the human figure and of flora [Fig. 2].⁵ In 1888 his father died suddenly, "and now it meant thinking seriously about earning money. The most obvious possibility was working as an illustrator for newspapers and publishers."⁶ Moser described there himself how, ten years before the publication of the first issue of the journal *Ver Sacrum*, having just turned twenty, he had to begin accumulating practical experience as an illustrator alongside his training at the academy. Commercial illustration would become the field for experimenting with his graphic concepts. "At first I was also working for *Wiener Mode* [Viennese Fashion], though it by no means appealed to my ambition. For the most part, I worked for German publications and specifically illustrated a great many books for the Schreiberscher Verlag in Esslingen."⁷ Moser produced illustrations with proposals for hair styles for that newly founded fashion magazine [Fig. 3]. The Schreiber Verlag, which had been in business since 1831, specialized in colorfully illustrated children's and nature books.⁸

Moser's style in these early drawings is linear, sketchlike, and academic, with no suggestion of spatial effect. The contact with Germany opened up a new horizon for the young student at the academy with regard to contemporary graphic arts. "Outside in Germany new life was already stirring," as Moser himself wrote. Vienna at the end of the 1880s, by contrast, was "still completely transfixed by the fashion for Makart, with its costume and imitative arts and dusty bouquets."⁹ By his own account, the young art student Moser gobbled up the sensational pamphlets that Alfred Lichtwark was publishing in Hamburg. Lichtwark—an art historian, critic, and founder of the Hamburger Kunsthalle, was the most enthusiastic promoter on the continent of the ideas coming from England, of John Ruskin and especially of William Morris and Walter Crane. He shared their ambition to return to honest artisanship in graphic design. These ideas also seem to have motivated Moser to take a new direction as a painter, his training having been until that point entirely academic and traditional.

4 Koloman Moser, "Vom Schreibtisch und aus dem Atelier: Mein Werdegang," *Velhagen & Klasing's Monatshefte* 31, no. 2 (October 1916): 254–62.

5 On this, see the drawings from the Koloman Moser papers held at the MAK and published, among other places, in Julia Allerstorfer, *Koloman Moser, Wien, 1868–1918: Arbeiten auf Papier*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Schütz, 2007), 15, fig. 2.

6 Max Eisler spoke of "earning a living working for magazines in the manner of *Wiener Mode*, which at the time hampered the progress of an artist more than it helped." Max Eisler, "Ein Frühwerk von Kolo Moser," *Die bildenden Künste: Wiener Monatshefte* 2, no. 4 (1918): 77–78.

7 The drawing is held in the MAK-Bibliothek und Kunstblättersammlung and the originals of the illustrations in the Schreiber Verlagsmuseum, Esslingen.

8 Hoffmann, "Meine Arbeit" (see note 3).

9 Ibid.



3. Koloman Moser, *Headdresses*, sketches for an illustration for the journal *Wiener Mode*, 1888–89

Pen and ink and pencil on paper

MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

Photo: © MAK/Georg Mayer

4. Koloman Moser,
Kopfleisten (Headpieces), 1896–97

Colored lithograph on paper
Illustration for Martin Gerlach,
Allegorien und Embleme, Neue Folge, pl. 94
Execution: Gerlach & Schenk, Vienna
MAK–Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/
Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK/Tibor Rauch



After completing his studies at the Akademie der bildenden Künste, in 1892 he began three years of training under Franz Matsch at Vienna's Kunstgewerbeschule. Matsch's course on decorative painting put Koloman Moser in contact with the new painting based on the applied arts: the teachers at the Kunstgewerbeschule were thus pursuing the call for a unity of the arts that had already been advocated by the British Arts and Crafts movement.¹⁰ Matsch had, together with the brothers Gustav and Ernst Klimt as part of their Künstler-Compagnie, produced large-scale painted decorative programs for buildings on the Ringstrasse such as the Burgtheater and the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Matsch, who was promoted to court painter, was also successful as a graphic artist and interior designer for the imperial dynasty. He recognized Koloman Moser's talent as a decorator and recommended him to the publisher Martin Gerlach, for whom he himself worked. Gerlach asked Moser in 1895 to work on his *Allegorien und Emblemen, Neue Folge* (Allegories and Emblems, New Series), a portfolio of models for those working in the crafts [Figs. 4–6]. "That resulted in me seeing him often; he always showed me the new works by various important and already famous artists he had persuaded to contribute to his portfolio," Moser recalled.¹¹

- 10 On the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement on Vienna, see Rainald Franz, "A Return to Simplicity, to Sincerity, to Good Materials and Sound Workmanship": Die Wirkung des Preraffaelite Movement und des Arts and Crafts-Style auf die Reformkunst in Wien," in Agnes Husslein-Arco and Alfred Weidinger, eds., *Sleeping Beauty: Masterpieces of Victorian Painting from Museo de Arte de Ponce*, trans. Rebecca Law and Nick Somers, exh. cat. (Vienna: Belvedere, 2010), 63–75. Max Eisler defined Moser's precursors as follows: "English book decoration, the half-French Mucha, the decorative artists of the new 'Jugend,' and folklore (in our case, specifically Slavic) were on the agenda at the time, and in the meanwhile Moser too goes in and out with them. All of them want stylization, each in his own way. Everything is become line." See Eisler, "Ein Frühwerk von Kolo Moser" (see note 6), 78. Alfred Lichtwark's "Makartbouquet und Blumenstrauß" and "Blumenkultur, Wilde Blumen" were published in 1894 and 1897, respectively. Lichtwark's phrase "Makart-bouquet" was cited not only by Koloman Moser but also by Ludwig Hevesi. Gerda Breuer, ed., *Ästhetik der schönen Genügsamkeit; oder, Arts & Crafts als Lebensform: Programmatische Texte* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1987). Gerda Breuer, ed., *Arts and Crafts: Von Morris bis Macintosh; Reformbewegung zwischen Kunstgewerbe und Sozialutopie*, exh. cat. (Darmstadt: Mathildenhöhe, 1994).
- 11 Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Heiliger Frühling: Gustav Klimt und die Anfänge der Wiener Secession, 1895–1905*, exh. cat., Graphische Sammlung Albertina (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1999), 63.

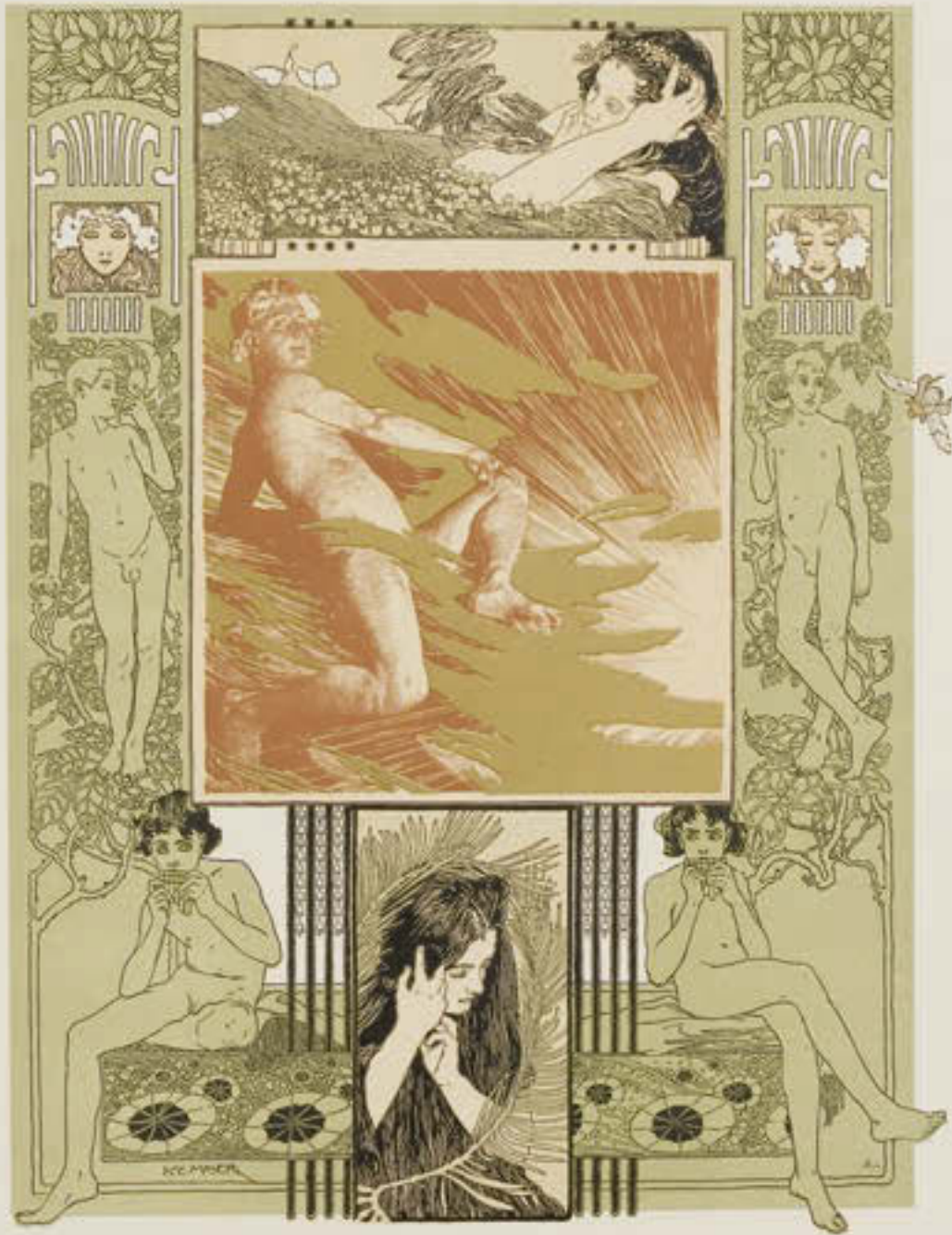
5. Koloman Moser, allegory
Frühlingsmorgen (Spring Morning),
1896–97

Colored lithograph on paper
Illustration for Martin Gerlach, *Allegorien
und Embleme, Neue Folge*, pl. 47
Execution: Gerlach & Schenk, Vienna
MAK–Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/
Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK/Tibor Rauch

GERLACH'S ALLEGORIEN.

Allegorien.

Allegorien.



Wasser im Sommer

Frühlingsergen

Wasser im Frühling

Deutschland, geschätzt, Original, England

N^o 47.

Verlag von G. Schönbach & Co. in Wien.



6. Koloman Moser, allegory *Liebe* (Love), 1895

Colored lithograph on paper

Illustration for Martin Gerlach, *Allegorien und Embleme, Neue Folge*, pl. 30

Execution: Gerlach & Schenk, Vienna

MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

Photo: © MAK

Working for Gerlach along with Moser were such successful artists as Franz von Stuck, Gustav Klimt, and Heinrich Leffler. For the new series in 1895 Moser produced the figurative allegories *Liebe* (Love), *Frühlingsmorgen* (Spring Morning), and *Sommer* (Summer), as well as a sheet of decorative headpieces [Figs. 5, 6].

With his allegories Moser reached an entirely new phase in his artistic development. The allegorical and symbolic references in his illustrations point to the coming deep-rooted change in Koloman Moser's concept of art, which would lead him away from historicism. The allegory *Frühlingsmorgen* already offered a strong contrast in palette, an oscillation between the contours and fill drawing of the figures, depending on whether they are to be seen as symmetrically arranged marginal motifs or, in the case of the allegory of morning in the central motifs. In a manner reminiscent of collage, the style also varies between the frame and the pictorial field proper: in the center, there is sculptural tracing that plays with the brightness of the background; in the frame, parallel hatching is employed.

The artistic form of Moser's allegory of summer is similar. Here too the artist combined allegorical motifs into a symmetrical arrangement, playing with shadow as a means to plasticity in the pictorial field, while the frame is formed by flatly sketched women bearing garlands, supplemented by three Cupids and a mask against a black background. In comparison to Gustav Klimt's allegory *Junius* of 1896, also found in this portfolio, Moser's composition features almost garish colors [Fig. 7]. Klimt's allegories—which were, in a sense, declarations of faith in his reorientation around the Symbolist model—appear delicate in their emphasis on fine lines and yet point the way forward in their play with the effect of the unworked plane, especially in the lower third of the image.

Klimt's allegorical painting *Liebe* (Love) of 1895 contrasts with Moser's allegory of love in its treatment of the same theme: its art of drawing emphasizes delicate materiality and strives to express the power of the unconscious [Fig. 8]. In Moser's work, his precursors are obvious: English illustrators in the style of Walter Crane and the German style of illustration employed by the successors to Max Klinger, as in the work showing a circle with a young couple watching a butterfly. With its stylization, Moser's allegory lacks all the sensuality that Klimt is still able to convey through drawing as well.

The flowing quality of the illustration, the overlapping of figure and planar motif, and the abstractly constructed masks on the sides reveal Moser's path to a graphic style whose goal is integration into the thematic context. The masks and initials are employed thereby like scattered patterns. The play with negative and positive form to produce space, a constantly recurring motif in Moser's works, is already inherent here [see Fig. 6].



7. Gustav Klimt, allegory *Junius*, 1896

Printed paper
 Illustration for Martin Gerlach, *Allegorien und Embleme, Neue Folge*, pl. 63
 Execution: Gerlach & Schenk, Vienna
 MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/
 Contemporary Art, Vienna
 Photo: © MAK



8. Gustav Klimt, allegory *Liebe* (Love), 1895

Oil on canvas
 Wien Museum, Vienna



9. Koloman Moser, title page design for "Lillis Traum," published in *Für die Jugend des Volkes*, 1896

Pencil and pen and ink on blue paper

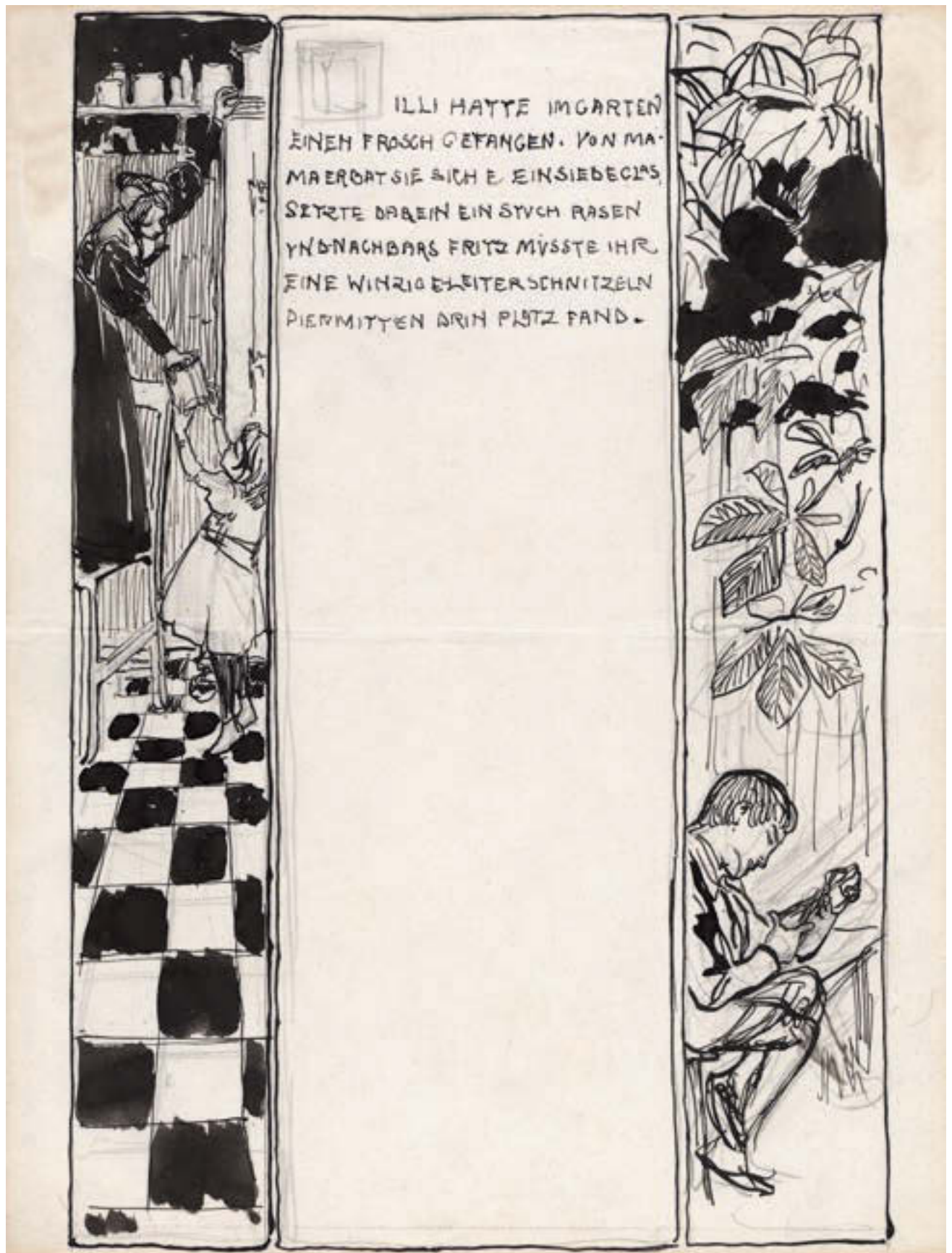
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

Photo: © MAK

THE SIEBENER-CLUB AND "FÜR DIE JUGEND DES VOLKES"

At the same time, and perhaps even before 1894, Moser had joined the architects Josef Hoffmann, Joseph Maria Olbrich, and Friedrich Pilz and the painters Adolf Karpellus, Leo Kainradl, and Maximilian Kurzweil to form the Siebener-Club (Club of Seven). The Siebener-Club, a loose café circle of students from the academy and the Kunstgewerbeschule, met regularly at the Blaues Freihaus or Café Sperl on Gumpendorferstrasse.¹² After the Hagensgesellschaft (Hagen Society), the Siebener-Club was the second "precursor organization" that, by way of the Künstlerhaus (Artists' house), would lead to the Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs—Secession (Union of Austrian Artists). The most enduring of these relationships would be Moser's friendship with Josef Hoffmann, who would become Moser's partner at the Secession, the Kunstgewerbeschule, and the Wiener Werkstätte. The lively artistic exchange between members resulted in correspondence cards that Moser and the other members sent each other and decorated with drawings. The subject matter of these postcards was usually a joint publication project among the artists of the Siebener-Club: the journal *Für die Jugend des Volkes* (For the Youth of the People), published by Die Volksschule, the publishing house of the Viennese teachers' association [Fig. 9]. Within two years, Moser produced more than 70 contributions and wrote a story for publication in the small-format journal [Fig. 10]. His illustrations for *Für die Jugend des Volkes* already reveal Moser taking a leading role as designer and developing the elements of the art of the book with a clear balance between illustration and text—something he would take up again later in his drawings for *Ver Sacrum* [Fig. 11]. Analogous to the Jugend (Youth) group founded in Munich in 1896, the initially unprepossessing journal became, thanks to Moser's designs, a graphic project that anticipated the austere design of the pages of *Ver Sacrum*. New formats for the depictions, a bolder line for the marginal vignettes, conscious play with black and white as a means to create spatial illusion, and the entire repertoire of modern book design were already being employed by Moser here [Fig. 12].

¹² Ibid., 59 ff.



ILLI HATTE IM GARTEN
EINEN FROSCH GEFANGEN. VON MA-
MAERDAT SIE SICH E. EINSIEBEGLAS,
SETZTE DABEIN EIN STUCH RASEN
UND NACHBARS FRITZ MUSSTE IHR
EINE WICHTIG ELEITERSCHNITZELN
DIERMITTEN DRIN PLITZ FAND.

10. Koloman Moser, illustration and layout for a page from "Lillis Traum," in *Für die Jugend des Volkes*, 1896

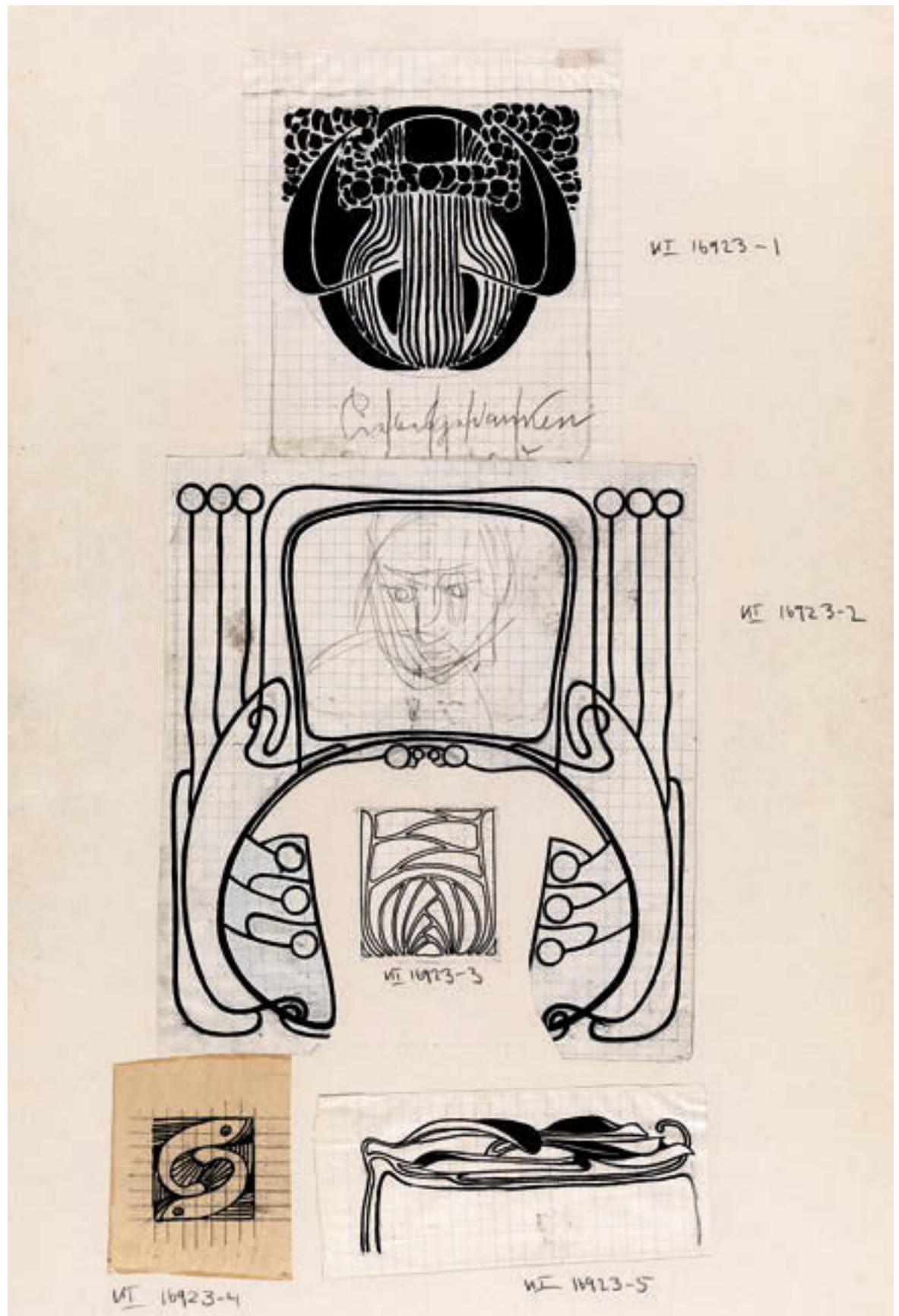
Pencil and ink on paper

MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

Photo: © MAK



11. Koloman Moser, *Zwei Blumen*
(Two Flowers), design models for
Die Jugend des Volkes, ca. 1896
Pen and ink on paper
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/
Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK



12. Koloman Moser, vignette designs in curvilinear style, ca. 1895

Pencil, pen, and ink on paper

MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna,

Photo: © MAK



13. Koloman Moser, calendar image for January, *Für die Jugend des Volkes*, 1896

Pencil, pen, ink, and body color on paper
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna,
Photo: © MAK

With the experience he had gained from his work on *Für die Jugend des Volkes*, Moser felt ready to accept the assignment offered him to illustrate the anthology *Jugendschatz deutscher Dichtungen* (Youth's Treasury of German Poems), edited by Felicie Ewart and published by the Verlag Waldheim. The curvilinear contour style of the jacket already anticipates the design of *Ver Sacrum* [Fig. 14].

Hans Ankwicz Kleehoven has rightly observed that the illustrations are “characterized by a degree of stylistic uncertainty where in many cases he treats the type area and the illustration as a unity but in others is content to add a vignette” [Fig. 13].¹³ His designs for the *Jugendschatz*, because they were produced in the same period as the preparations for the publication of *Ver Sacrum*, represent important comparative examples from Moser’s commercial production that helped prepare the way to the design of that avant-garde publication [Fig. 15].

13 Eisler, “Ein Frühwerk von Kolo Moser” (see note 6), 7–8.

14. Koloman Moser, cover design for Felicie Ewald’s *Jugendschatz Deutscher Dichtung* (Treasures of German Literature for the Young), 1897

Pencil, pen, and ink on paper
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/
Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK/Tibor Rauch





15. Koloman Moser, *Nixe* (Water Nymph),
design model for *Jugendschatz Deutscher
Dichtung*, 1897

Pen and ink on paper
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/
Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK



16a–d. Koloman Moser, cover designs for *Die Kunst für Alle*, 1897

Pencil, pen and ink on paper

MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

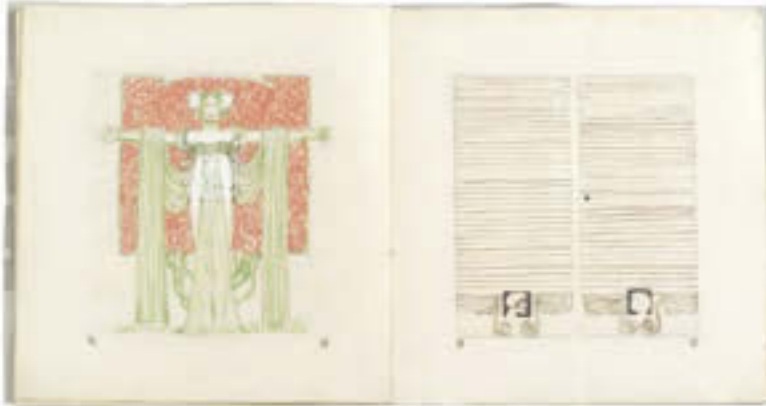
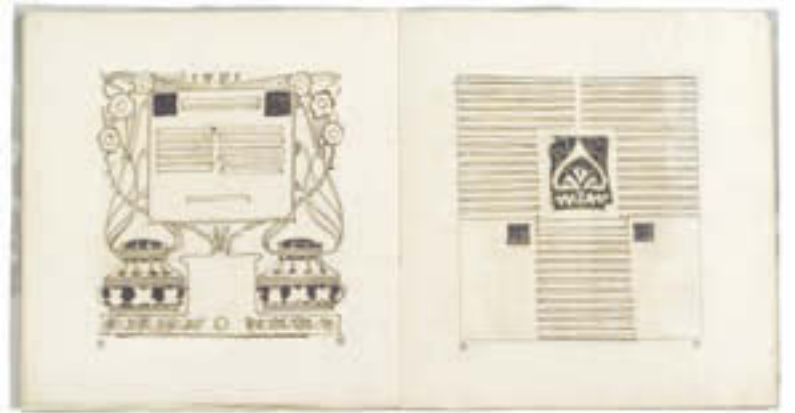
Photo: © MAK



The period prior to the publication of the first issue of the *Mitteilungen der Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs* (Reports of the Union of Austrian Artists)—the subtitle of *Ver Sacrum*—also saw four designs for the cover of *Kunst für Alle* (Art for All), published by Bruckmann in Munich [Figs. 16a–d]. Here too Moser played with design possibilities that had advanced from apparent stylistic uncertainties to modes of his artistic practice.



17. Koloman Moser, drafts for the first issue of *Ver Sacrum* (Sacred Spring), 1897
 Pencil, colored chalk, ink, and watercolor on paper
 Leopold Museum, Privat-Stiftung, Vienna





18. Koloman Moser, *Mädchenkopf* (Girl's Head), design for the cover of *Ver Sacrum* (Sacred Spring), journal of the Vienna Secession, 1899 (11, 4)

Printed paper

Neue Galerie New York

Photo: Hulya Kolabas, New York



19. Koloman Moser, unrealized design for the Secession poster *Erste Grosse Kunstausstellung* (First Grand Art exhibition), 1898

Watercolor, gouache, colored pencil and metal color on tracing linen
Leopold Museum, Privat-Stiftung, Vienna



20. Koloman Moser, poster for the Fifth Secession exhibition, 1899

Colored lithograph on paper
Richard Grubman and Caroline Mortimer
Photo: Hulya Kolabas, New York

THE SECESSION ERA, 1897–1905

Planar style, contour design, playing with bright and dark, the effect of rapid switching—Moser developed had at least the initial stages of all these elements in his design projects when the group of Secessionists that resigned from the Künstlerhaus on July 21, 1897, resolved at a meeting to publish its own organ under the title *Ver Sacrum*. Moser must have been very committed to his involvement in developing this publication project, since, together with Gerlach and Schenk, he co-signed the contract with the publishing house in the name of the Secession working committee. The contract states of the goals and ambitions of the publication: “*Ver Sacrum* is printed on good paper and with special letters and in its overall appearance conveys the impression of artistic elegance. [...] The illustration section consists of reprints of studies, sketches, sculptures [...] as well as of ornamental vignettes, headpieces, panels, and so on.”¹⁴ *Ver Sacrum* would become the first modern art journal of rigorously consistent design, in which the layout and the book ornaments were designed together by an editorial team.

¹⁴ Reprinted in Bisanz-Prakken, *Heiliger Frühling* (see note 11), 217.

21. Koloman Moser, vignette designs
for *Ver Sacrum*, 1898

Pencil, ink, and body colors on paper

MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

Photo: © MAK



Moser produced the earliest surviving design for the journal's overall layout [Fig. 17].¹⁵ Within a strict square format, which became canonical, he grouped fairy-tale illustrations, the "landscape of the soul," the Japanizing landscape fragment, architectural drawings in the style of Otto Wagner's school, caricatures, and symbolic allegories as counterweight to the strict type area of two to three columns. The book ornamentation proper was either floral curves or linear abstraction. Many of the aforementioned features were adopted by Moser from commercial illustration tasks; the look is homogeneous. Moser's commitment to *Ver Sacrum* was also expressed by the fact that of the years between 1898 and 1903, the years when the Secessionist journal was published, the year 1900 was the only one when he was not a leading member of the editorial committee that assembled the illustrations and texts [Fig. 18]. Of the 23 exhibitions the Secession organized through 1905, Moser designed four of them alone, eight together with Josef Hoffmann, and two as part of the exhibition committee. He designed the posters for the Fifth and Thirteenth exhibitions [Figs. 19, 20] and the catalogues for the Fourth, Thirteenth, and Nineteenth exhibitions [Fig. 1].¹⁶

Vignette designs for the first year of *Ver Sacrum* in 1898 take up a motif to which Moser would devote himself repeatedly.

A young woman with flowing hair stands with her body turned elegantly and entwined with flowers and branches. Postcards by Moser for the First Secession exhibition in the rooms of the Gartenbau [Fig. 23] and his illustrations in *Ver Sacrum* show the figure of woman as a symbol of awakening and revival in connection with motifs of flowers and trees—for example, the illustrations for Arno Holz's poem "Schwertlilie" (Iris) or the girl beneath a flowering tree in the first year of *Ver Sacrum*. Berta Zuckerkandl called them "slyphlike, delicate, inclining, bending female forms, little ladies with shimmering, fluttering garments."¹⁷ Compared to the female figures by Gustav Klimt, Josef Engelhart, or Ernst Stöhr published in *Ver Sacrum*, Moser's women and girls are stylized in a nonsensuous way; their loose hair seems like an opportunity to explore new, linear planar patterns, and physicality is negated in favor of the outline [Fig. 22].¹⁸

15 The first draft for the layout is now held by the Leopold Museum, Vienna.

16 Hans Ankwicz Kleehoven, "Die Anfänge der Wiener Sezession," *Alte und Moderne Kunst* 5, nos. 6–7 (1960): 6–10. Oskar Pausch, "Kolo Moser and the Founding of the Secession," in Rudolf Leopold and Gerd Pichler, eds., *Koloman Moser, 1868–1918*, trans. Jane Michael, et al., exh. cat. Leopold-Museum, Vienna (Munich: Prestel, 2007), 58–61.

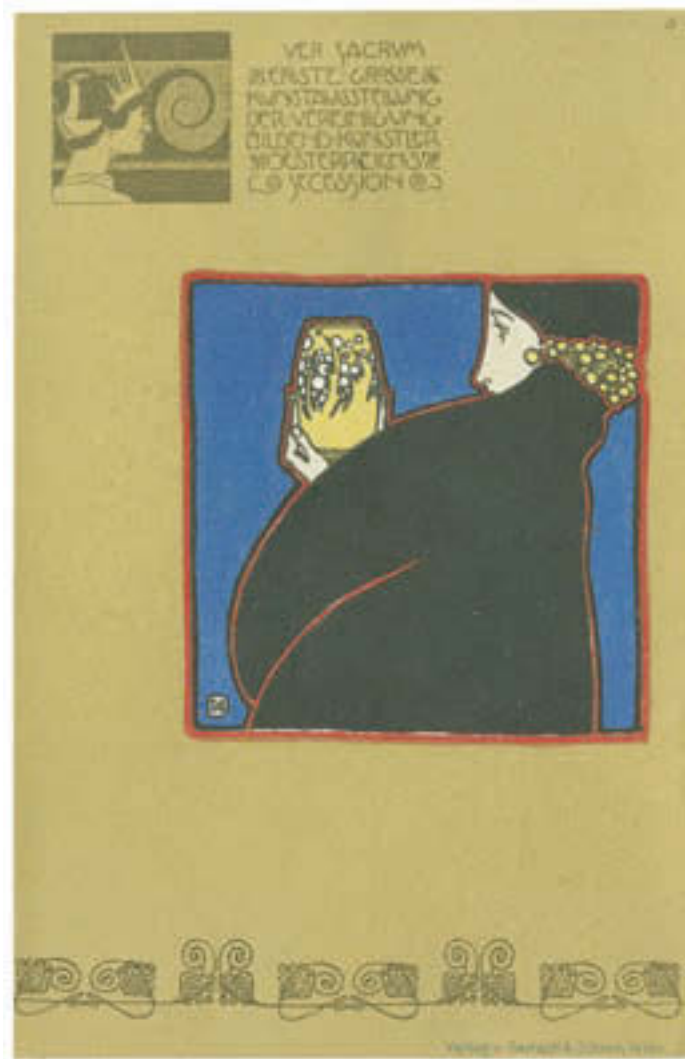
17 Berta Zuckerkandl in *Dekorative Kunst* 7 (1901): 227.

18 On the woman as type in Moser, see Josef Engemann, "Koloman Moser: Ein 'Aussteiger' der Wiener Sezession," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 56–57 (2002): 271–312.

22. Koloman Moser, model for *Ver Sacrum* 1,
Schwertlilie (Iris) by Arno Holz, 1898
Pencil, ink, and body color on paper
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK



23. Koloman Moser, postcards nos. 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 for the First Vienna Secession exhibition in the rooms of the Gartenbau-Gesellschaft (Horticultural Society), 1898
 Colored lithographs on paper
 Collection of Leonard A. Lauder







The major graphic work in the first issue was a lithograph based on a drawing by Moser, which displayed already defined stylistic elements of modernism. The “decorative spot,” a profile of a girl’s head, was placed in the square pictorial field following the rules of the golden section, with the green area of her hair emphasizing her face and the quoted landscape [Fig. 24]. Variations in different colors sounded out the design possibilities; indeed, it appears Moser even considered producing it as a stained-glass window, as a sketch shows. Moser continued to develop the themes of the profile portrait and the stereotyped rendering of a woman as an illustration, making it his signet within the square. The influence of the model of Japanese dyeing stencils is already evident here, and subsequently he would also employ it for pedagogical purposes when teaching at the Kunstgewerbeschule [Fig. 25a–c].

24. Koloman Moser, *Portrait of a Girl in Profile*, study for *Ein Dekorativer Fleck in Rot und Grün* (A Decorative Spot in Red and Green), model for illustration in *Ver Sacrum*, 1897

India ink, watercolor, and gold on paper
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK/Georg Mayer



25a. Koloman Moser, *Sich reckendes Mädchen* (Girl Stretching), preliminary study for *Ver Sacrum* 1, 1898

Flowering tree, pencil on paper
MAK—Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna
Photo: © MAK



25b. Koloman Moser, *Mädchen mit Lyra* (Girl with Lyre),
marginal vignette for *Ver Sacrum* (Sacred Spring) 1, 1898

Pencil and pen and ink on paper

MAK–Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

Photo: © MAK



25c. Koloman Moser, nine stylized round forms, 1898

Ink on paper cut out in various ways

MAK–Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

Photo: © MAK