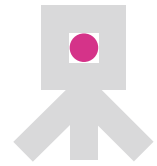


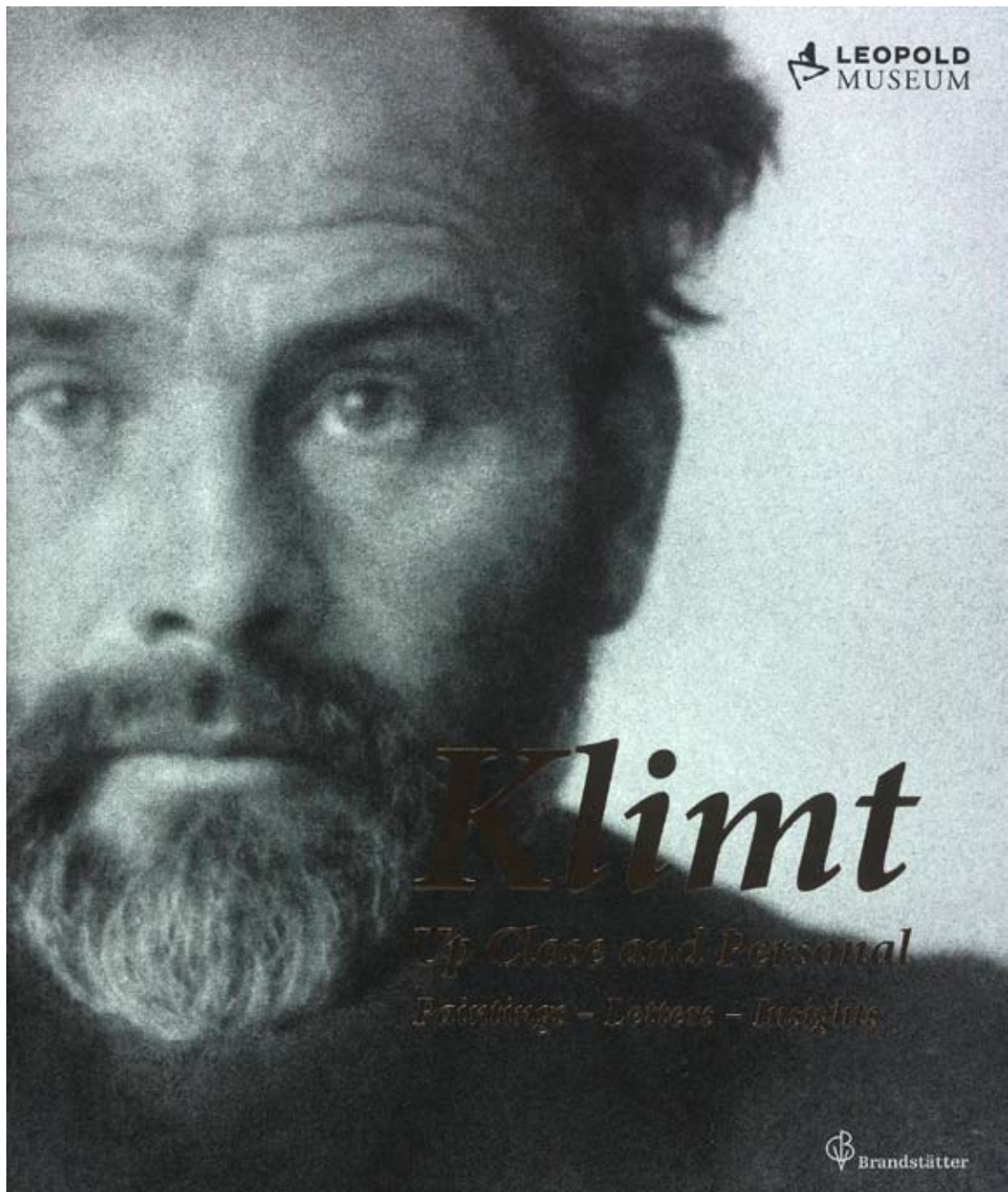
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Uwe Schögl  
**Gustav Klimt**  
**in Contemporary Photographs**

This essay appeared in the catalogue  
*Klimt: Up Close and Personal.*  
*Paintings – Letters – Insights,*  
(pp. 84-97);  
Tobias G. Natter, Franz Smola  
and Peter Weinhäupl (eds.),  
published by Brandstätter Verlag,  
Vienna 2012 in connection with the  
Gustav Klimt anniversary exhibition  
at the Leopold Museum, Vienna  
(24 February 2012 - 27 August 2012)



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# Gustav Klimt in Contemporary Photographs

Uwe Schögl

Gustav Klimt was the focal point of photographs all of his adult life, as he had the financial means to regularly have portraits made of himself by Vienna's most prestigious photo studios. These portrait studies were authorized by Klimt; they thus had something of an official character and were sometimes used for publications. A different matter entirely is the large body of private photographs of the prominent artist that has also survived. Most of these pictures were taken on Lake Attersee, the Upper Austrian lake where Klimt customarily spent his *Sommerfrische*, the phenomenon in which city dwellers packed their belongings each year and moved out to the countryside to escape the summer heat of the city. Klimt spent his *Sommerfrische* with the Flöge family from 1900 to 1916,<sup>1</sup> and during these sojourns Klimt himself occasionally acted as photographer.<sup>2</sup> At the turn of the century it was becoming fashionable, particularly among members of amateur camera clubs, to take snapshots of private festivities and travels. With a minimum of technical expertise, it was possible to preserve important family events and everyday occurrences as mementos for the family album. This was the same casual visual language that characterized the snapshots being taken during that period at various exhibition openings (such as Vienna's 1908 *Kunstschau*), at artists' parties, and on Klimt's travels.

It is astounding that up to now, scholars have regarded the photographs of Gustav Klimt solely as documentary elements of his biography.<sup>3</sup> The objective of this essay is to place the many-faceted spectrum of photographs of Gustav Klimt in a photo-historical context and conduct an analysis of them. In the course of this, based on the sources of the pictures, we will explore the question of which photographs of Klimt were created in studios, and to what extent his influence on the creative process of these (self-)portraits had an effect on the final picture. These studio photographs will be contrasted with the amateur snapshots taken during the *Sommerfrische* on Lake Attersee, which are distinguished above all by their private character.

A special role in this regard is played by Klimt's "personal photographer," Moritz Nähr, who bequeathed to us an iconic Klimt image. As the long-time chronicler of Klimt's life, Nähr was the only photographer permitted to take pictures of the interiors and exteriors of the artist's studios.

In general, with regard to the photographic images of Klimt it should be stressed that the societal context was an important component in the conception of these pictures.

## The significance of photography for Klimt

Klimt's relationship with photography began with the recognition of the possibilities it offered him for his painting activities. As early as 1886, when he was executing ceiling paintings for Vienna's newly constructed Burgtheater, he utilized the photographic reproduction principle as a compositional aid<sup>4</sup> – a method that enjoyed great popularity in Historicism but was used only surreptitiously by painters.<sup>5</sup> Years later, the zoom effect created through the use of a telephoto lens (or telescope) would become an important creative component in the selection of motifs for Klimt's landscape paintings.<sup>6</sup>

Klimt followed with interest the photographic reform movements taking shape at the turn

1. Gustav Klimt's *Sommerfrische* sojourns began in St. Agatha in 1898 and continued each year, with few exceptions, from 1900 to 1916 at various locations on Lake Attersee. For a detailed overview of Klimt's summer stays in the Salzkammergut, see Partsch 1996, p. 33f, and the essay in this volume by Sandra Tretter and Peter Weinhäupl, pp. 60-83.

2. In the summer of 1906 Klimt took twenty photographs of Emilie Flöge wearing dresses they had designed together (album in the estate of Emilie Flöge). Ten of these pictures were published in the journal "Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration," vol. 19, p. 65, Darmstadt, October 1906 – March 1907.

3. The presentation of these "photographic documents" is most clearly separated from that of Klimt's work in the appendix "Katalog der Dokumente," exhib. cat., Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich 1992, p. 347ff.

4. Klimt used model photographs in the design stage of the ceiling paintings for the right staircase of the new Burgtheater. It has also been established that Klimt painted miniature portraits from photographs during his student days to help his father support their family. Eder 2000, pp. 50-56.

5. Schögl 2011, pp. 211-222.

6. The first detailed analysis of this "viewfinder" principle with regard to Gustav Klimt was made in Secession 1988.

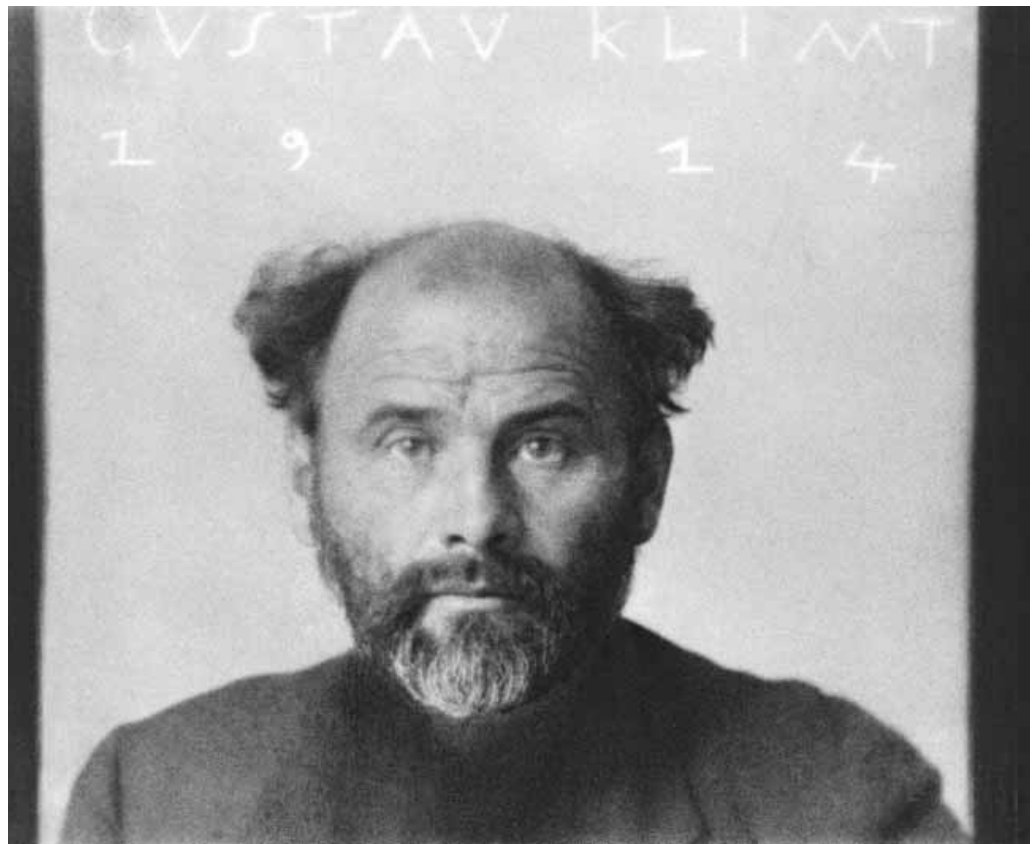


**Moritz Nähr, Gustav Klimt, c. 1910**  
Silver gelatine print, 14.4 x 10.1 cm  
Austrian National Library/Vienna,  
Pf 31931 C (2)

of the century, such as Pictorialism, in which amateur photographers elevated the artificiality of image composition to an art form equal to painting. With the photographers' association known as the "Wiener Kleeblatt," or "Wiener Trifolium," founded in 1897 by Heinrich Kühn, Hugo Henneberg, and Hans Watzek, Vienna became a center for this movement, which exhibited internationally, published numerous articles, and had ties to the Secession.<sup>7</sup> In 1902, at the initiative of Carl Moll, the Thirteenth Secession Exhibition presented

7. Between 1900 and 1903 Josef Hoffmann designed and built villas on Vienna's Hohe Warte, in the Döbling neighborhood, for the photographers Hugo Henneberg and Friedrich Viktor Spitzer.





Anton Josef Trčka, Gustav Klimt, 1914  
Private collection

large-scale photographic works by the Vienna Camera Club. Because of their size and the use of new photochemical processes, these works, by Friedrich Viktor Spitzer and others, resembled paintings. Another presentation followed in 1904. This new photography movement spawned a large number of amateur associations and was prolific in its exhibition activities,<sup>8</sup> presenting works at venues such as Vienna's Galerie Miethke (1901, 1905), the Kunstsalon Heller (1909, 1912), and the Galerie Pisko (1909, 1912).

As a (brief) member of the editorial board of "Ver Sacrum," the Secession's monthly journal, Klimt had contact with the members of the Vienna Camera Club and published their works in the journal as early as 1898. Klimt was also kept abreast of the latest trends in photography by the international magazine *The Studio*.<sup>9</sup> It is likely that Klimt's relationship to art photography was greatly intensified through the commission he received from Henneberg in 1901/02 to paint a portrait of the photographer's wife.<sup>10</sup> The affinity Klimt had for this photography movement seems also to have been reflected in his choice of studios to create his photographic portraits.

#### Klimt and studio photography

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Klimt never showed any interest in painting self-portraits. But although he claimed that he was "not interested" in himself "as a 'subject for a painting,'"<sup>11</sup> this did not hold true for photography. While it is not known if Klimt was actually fond of this type of portraiture, sitting for a portrait in one of Vienna's prestigious

8. The best-known associations in Vienna were the "Wiener Camera Club," the "Wiener Amateur Fotografen Klub," and the "Photographische Gesellschaft;" see also exhib. cat., Albertina, Vienna 2011.

9. The art journal "The Studio," ed. by Charles Holme, first published in 1893, issued a special edition in summer 1905 titled "Art in Photography."

10. *Portrait of Marie Henneberg*, 1901/02, Staatliche Galerie Moritzburg, Landeskundemuseum Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle a. d. Saale – ND 1967, no. 123; WSW 2007, no. 154; N 2012, no. 142.

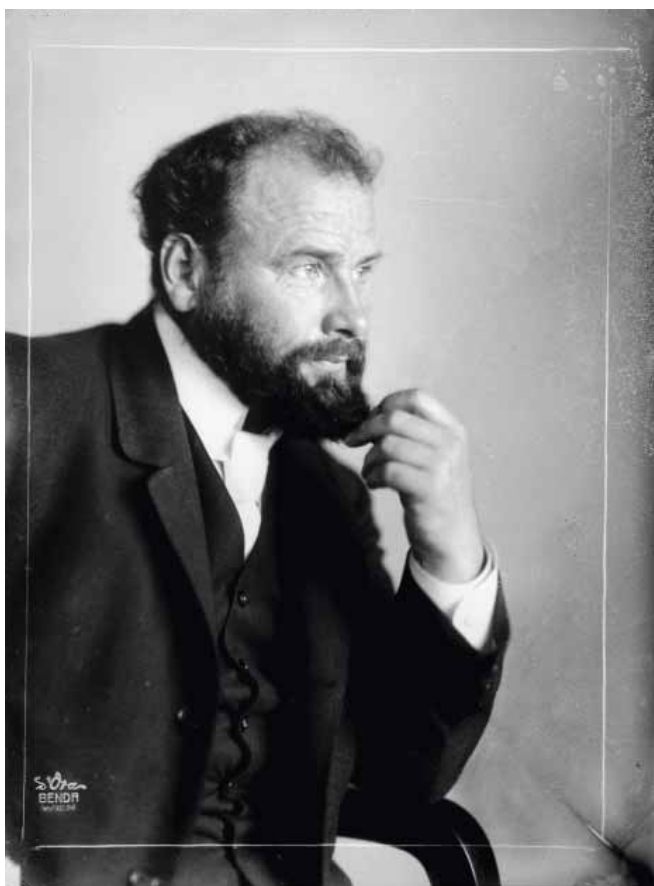
11. "I'm not interested in myself as a 'subject' of a painting." Gustav Klimt, typescript recollection (Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Vienna, Inv. HIN 152.980), quoted in Nebehay 1969, p. 32, and in note 21.



**Friedrich Viktor Spitzer, Gustav Klimt, c. 1905**  
Bromoil transfer, 22.6 x 17 cm  
Wien Museum, Vienna

photo studios was certainly part of that era's widespread desire for self-promotion. Only very few statements by Klimt on the subject of photography have been passed down, and even these provide little information, such as in a message to Emilie Flöge: "... was photographed this morning by Nähr – at the Kunstschau – I am curious!" (8 July 1909, no. 157). Among Vienna's studios, Klimt in any case favored those that perceived photography as art,<sup>12</sup> commissioning portraits from Dora Kallmus ("Madame d'Ora") in 1908, Pauline Hamilton in 1909, Anton Josef Trčka ("Antios") in 1914, as well as from Moritz Nähr and Friedrich Viktor Spitzer.

12. The numerous representatives of photographic groups in Vienna conducted a bitter debate as to what "artistic photography" was. These arguments were comparable to those engaged in by members of the Secession.



Madame d'Ora-Benda, Gustav Klimt in a three-piece suit, 1908  
Original glass plates with cutting marks of Atelier d'Ora-Benda,  
Austrian National Library/Vienna, 203435-D, 203436-D, 203437-D, 203438-D





tures and emotions of the sitter that in the photograph would appear to grow out of a natural movement. It was this very process of bringing out these distinctive characteristics that at that time was regarded as the hallmark of top-quality portraiture. Klimt possessed the aura of a “refined ‘child of nature,’ a cross between a satyr and an ascetic,”<sup>15</sup> as the contemporary art critic Hans Tietze characterized him – and as he was aptly portrayed by studio photographers. Klimt knew how to use his “erotic magnetism and the libertine image of a ‘genius’”<sup>16</sup> to create a myth-like, colorful persona and thus also increase his commercial value.<sup>17</sup>

Moritz Nähr was Klimt’s long-time portrait photographer and chronicler, and we have him to thank for what are presumably the last pictures of Gustav Klimt, taken in 1917. Biographical details about Nähr are scant, but his relationship with Klimt was described as “idolatrous.”<sup>18</sup> Klimt demonstrated the great trust he had in his lifelong friend and companion<sup>19</sup> by permitting him, and him alone, to take pictures of his studios and to make photographic reproductions of his paintings.<sup>20</sup> This very personally motivated model-photographer relationship is likely also the premise for the photographic portraits: Klimt’s desire to cultivate a certain image as an artist and Nähr’s desire to realize this self-image through artistic photographs. Although Nähr had his own studio in Vienna’s seventh district, it was his custom to portray his clients, including Klimt, in natural environments, such as in an apartment or in the outdoors.<sup>21</sup> Nähr composed each individual photograph of Klimt with great care and according to specific criteria: he employed devices such as the delicate interplay of sharpness and blurriness, the retouching of the negative (in order to intensify effects), the use of planar and neutral backgrounds, and the selection of cropped picture details. In terms of visual language, Nähr attempted to capture Gustav Klimt as far as possible with self-confident facial expressions and gestures, with the intention of drawing the viewer’s attention to the portrait subject and eliciting admiration. Nähr’s portraits are among the few examples of Klimt photographs for which there is evidence of an intended purpose.<sup>22</sup> Large-format prints are either signed by the photographer (“M. Nähr.”) or bear Klimt’s autograph.<sup>23</sup> It is likely that Klimt sometimes passed these authorized photos on to his clients or presented them to friends as mementos. Gustav Klimt used one picture from this portrait series as his passport photo. The passport was issued on 24 May 1917 by the Imperial and Royal Police Authority in Vienna and permitted Klimt to undertake “recreational trips” during the war years within Austria.<sup>24</sup>

### Identity crisis and reorientation

In 1905 the conflict surrounding the university paintings reached a fever pitch, plunging Klimt into an identity crisis. This personal ordeal was followed by a new artistic self-image and a change in his style<sup>25</sup> to a more planar, ornamental orientation. Klimt distanced himself from his role as a creator of public art – a transformer of life into art, presented as a utopian refuge of absolute happiness – and concentrated his artistic work on the “private sphere: portraits.”<sup>26</sup> Klimt traded his public life for a life of seclusion on Lake Attersee, where he spent his summer holidays with a faithful entourage of friends and clients.<sup>27</sup> The

15. Quoted in Brandstätter 1994, p. 46.

16. Natter 2000/01, p. 61.

17. This photographic self-dramatization by celebrated artists had its roots in the “genius worship” attitudes of Historicism (an exemplary case in Vienna was Hans Makart), which lasted well into the twentieth century (e.g., Pablo Picasso).

18. Recollections of the eighty-year-old Moritz Nähr; see Pirchan 1942, p. 74f. Nähr is erroneously called Max instead of Moritz here.

19. “Nähr brought me a small bunch of flowers yesterday from his wife, she had picked them in the garden. ‘It’s not my fault’ he said when he handed them to me. He is a clumsy man.” Postcard from Gustav Klimt to Emilie Flöge (29 June 1912, no. 286).

20. “Nähr will photograph your painting today. Afterwards it will be collected / Munich 4 Seasons.” Postcard from Gustav Klimt to Emilie Flöge (8 July 1908, no. 99).

21. The “Archducal Photographer to the Imperial Court” (1909) Moritz Nähr photographed Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Estonia, successor to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his family at their residence at Belvedere Palace, Vienna.

22. Astonishingly, portrait photographs of Klimt were, as a rule, never reproduced in exhibition catalogues during his lifetime, but only for later memorial exhibitions, such as in the case of the pictures by Pauline Hamilton in the exhibition catalogue of the Vienna Secession in 1928.

23. Moritz Nähr apparently never used a studio stamp to mark his photographs but rather signed them with a delicate graphite script. His signatures on the portrait photographs of Gustav Klimt are identical to those on the photographs of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Gustav Klimt used Indian ink for his signature.

24. Gustav Klimt’s passport, “valid for travel further into the war zone, specifically to Styria, Salzburg, and North Tirol – including the return journey,” for the purpose of “recreational trips.”





Moritz Nähr, Signature of the artist, detail of a photograph, c. 1910  
Austrian National Library/Vienna, Pf 21134 F (2)



Moritz Nähr, Signature of Gustav Klimt, detail of a portrait of Gustav Klimt wearing a painter's smock, 1912  
Austrian National Library/Vienna, Pf 31931 D (2)

Gustav Klimt with members of the "Club of Seven", 1894  
Austrian National Library/Vienna, Pf 31931 B (1)

social context, however, continued to be a decisive element in Klimt's attitude toward his art:<sup>28</sup> his private clients and his altered everyday habits were critical in the choice of subject and content of his pictures.<sup>29</sup> Klimt's newly gained privacy now also influenced his photographic self-conception.

#### The artist's new self-conception in photographs

The tranquility he enjoyed in his studio and during his *Sommerfrische* was vital for Klimt.<sup>30</sup> Shortly after Klimt's death, Hermann Bahr noted "how wonderful his life was in the last six or seven years, after he had withdrawn completely. This kind of withdrawal is simply a part of being a complete Austrian."<sup>31</sup>

25. Schorske viewed this conflict as the cause of Klimt's personal crisis and the subsequent change of style. See Schorske 1997, p. 232 ff, quoted in exhibit. cat., Belvedere, Vienna 2002/03, p. 35-36.

26. Koja 2002a, p. 36.

27. For a discussion of the influence of their *Sommerfrische* domiciles on the pictorial composition of vacationing artists, see Schögl 2008, pp. 7-49.



H. Böhler, *Gustav Klimt and Emilie Flöge*, 1909  
Austrian National Library/Vienna,  
Pf 31931 E (2)

Let us return to the period around 1900, when the crisis Klimt experienced due to the public rejection of his university paintings by the press and his clients was in its initial phase. A comparison of portraits taken by Moritz Nähr serves to illustrate the transformation that Klimt's self-promotion underwent.

Until the turning point in 1905, Klimt basked in – and made a public display of – the pioneer role he played in both artistic and social contexts. In 1902, at the Fourteenth Secession Exhibition, Moritz Nähr had photographed the group's members in the Secession shortly before the exhibition opening. The arrangement and the casual poses of the artists appear arbitrary, but they were in fact carefully staged: Klimt is not given center stage among his fellow artists; what sets him apart in a motific sense is his sitting position. This motif-like "detail" had appeared as early as 1884 in a very similarly arranged picture by an unknown photographer, taken at the opening of the "Siebenerclub" (Club of Seven), and was to be repeated frequently in comparable photographs. Nähr later produced a variation of this group photo of 1902, creating an individual portrait of Gustav Klimt in the same pose, a picture that has often erroneously been thought to be an enlarged detail of the original group portrait. Nähr's "spin-off" shows Klimt "enthroned" in the exhibition space of the Secession with his painter's smock, holding his paintbrushes – as characteristic props – and adopting a seated pose familiar to us from Renaissance portraits of royalty. Here, Klimt presents himself (in a public space) in the sovereign symbolism of an "artist-monarch." A depiction of Klimt by H. Böhler in 1909 was already pointing in a new direction. Böhler used a "reform dress" (*Reformkleid*), which Kolo Moser had presumably designed for Emilie Flöge, as a pretext for an innovative series of staged photographs in the garden of the artist's studio (Josefstädter Strasse 21) in the summer of 1909.<sup>32</sup> This also gave Klimt the chance to show himself off in a photograph wearing his new artist's smock. In this case as well, we can assume that Klimt exerted an influence on the creative photographic process. The entire scene creates the impression of a studio portrait moved outdoors – although somewhat static due to the need, corresponding to the conventions of fashion photography at that time, to display these prototypes as prominently as possible. The natural lighting as well as the subjects, who appear to be in motion, bring to mind amateur photos, taken in a private setting and simply depicting two people (man and woman) dancing lightheartedly in the outdoors: a studiously harmonious image creating the overall impression of a peaceful male-female relationship in an imaginary sphere of freedom. Nähr's skillfully staged image of a "fulfilled, idyllic relationship" should not obscure the fact that Klimt's attitudes with respect to gender roles – privately as well as in the context of his art – have been interpreted in a contrary manner in the psychological analyses of a number of scholars.<sup>33</sup>

#### *An artist's private life – painter's smocks and cats*

The presentation of Gustav Klimt in a painter's smock is part of his "dramatization" as a private person. Egon Schiele recalled that Klimt received visitors at the entrance to his secluded courtyard studio at Josefstädter Strasse 21 wearing "a blue smock with large pleats hanging down to his heels."<sup>34</sup> Even during his *Sommerfrische* on Lake Attersee, he was

28. Carl E. Schorske also pointed out the parallels between Sigmund Freud and Gustav Klimt, who both withdrew from public life after massive attacks. Schorske 1982, p. 195.

29. On the societal contextualization of Klimt's portraits around 1905, see the monographic study of his works by Zaunschirm, in Zaunschirm 1987.

30. Klimt's numerous moves to increasingly remote and quiet areas should also be seen in this context. See exhibit. cat., Belvedere, Vienna 2002/2003, p. 37 and note 28.

31. Letter from Hermann Bahr to Josef Redlich of 14 February 1918, quoted in Fellner 1980, p. 309.

32. Two more photos from this sequence are extant, one of which shows only Emilie Flöge. The short, intense shadows of the two subjects make it likely that these were taken in the summer months.

33. Herding 1995, pp. 359-366.

34. Egon Schiele, quoted in Hölzl 1996, p. 30.





habitually attired in this male version of the “reform dress.” On the other hand, the photographs Friedrich G. Walker took on Lake Attersee in 1913, during the artist’s *Sommerfrische*, of Klimt in his painter’s smock seem to have had a documentary purpose. One of these pictures is indeed a unique specimen: it is the only color photograph of Gustav Klimt that has been passed down to us.<sup>35</sup> The Lumière Autochrome process, patented by the Lumière brothers and first marketed in 1907, was greeted as a sensation by amateur photographers: for the first time it was possible to capture, in only one exposure, the world in “natural colors” (according to the Lumière brothers’ advertising). Amateur photographers were now finally able to record family festivities and vacations in color, although this process was still relatively expensive. Only very few professional photographers, among them Heinrich Kühn and Edward Steichen, explored the artistic possibilities of this new color process. With the photographic self-dramatization in his painter’s smock, Klimt was pursuing a clear self-dramatization of his artistic persona. Moritz Nähr and Pauline Hamilton subse-

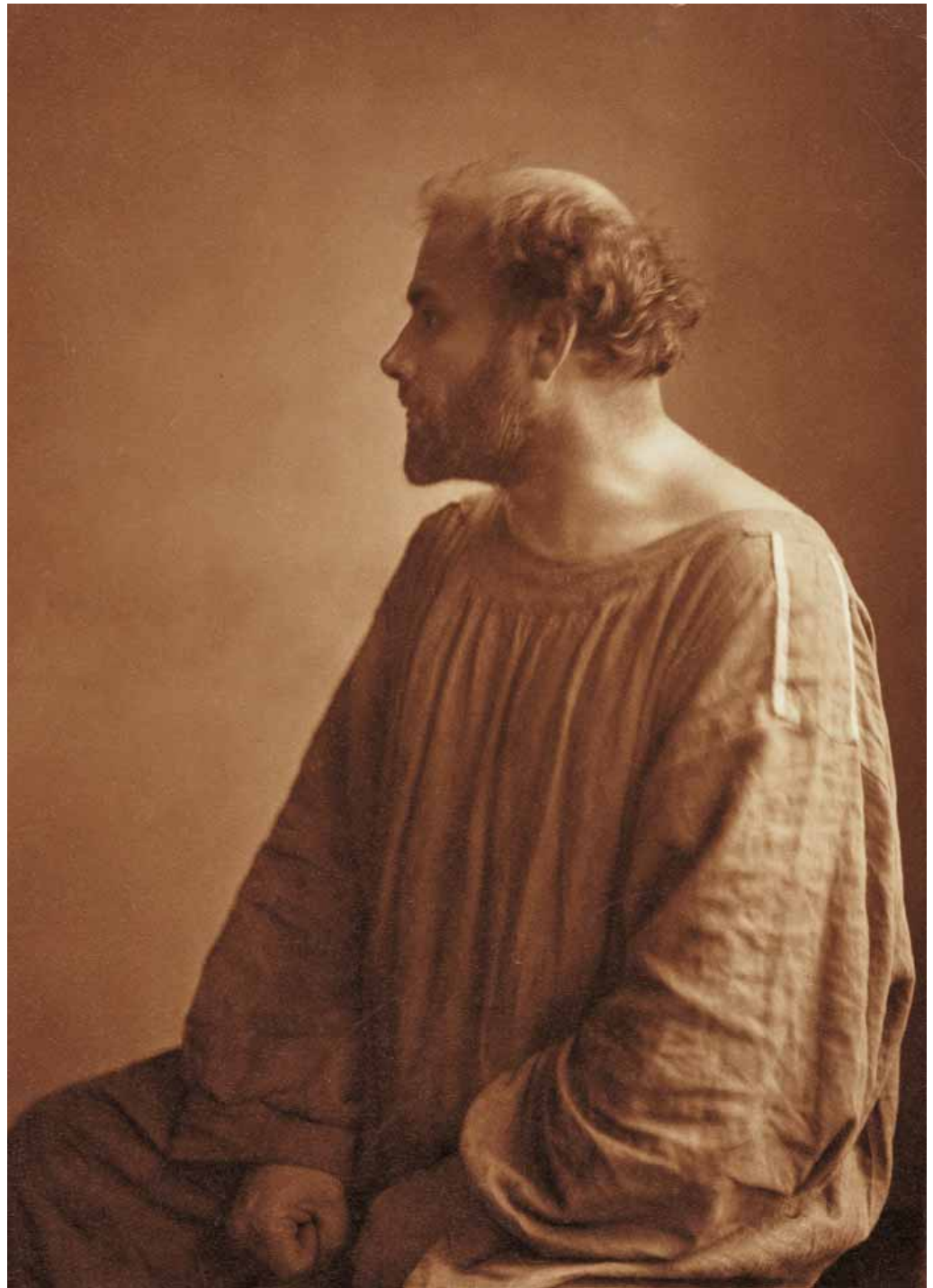
**Friedrich G. Walker, Gustav Klimt on Lake Attersee, 1913**  
Autochrome Lumière Plate  
Private collection

35. Two other pictures from this series by Friedrich G. Walker show Emilie Flöge in reform dresses.





**Pauline Hamilton, Gustav Klimt, c. 1909**  
Silver bromide print, 22.5 x 16.5 cm  
Private collection, Salzburg



**Pauline Hamilton, Gustav Klimt, profile to the left, c. 1909**  
Bromide silver print, 22 x 16 cm  
Private collection, Salzburg

36. Based on the vegetation in the picture, it is probable that the photographs were taken in May or June, and the year is presumably 1911, as Klimt had moved into his new studio already in March 1911. See also Ploil 2011, p. 300f.

quently continued to develop this image in photographs. Nähr now had enlarged his photographic scope, placing his model (Klimt) in the context of his “habitat,” the garden in front of his studio at Josefstädter Strasse 21. The garden and studio are the motif that dominates these pictures, and Gustav Klimt – scarcely recognizable – can be seen, dressed in his painter’s smock, in various “natural” poses. This series was shot in the early summer of 1911 or 1912,<sup>36</sup> shortly before the demolition of the studio where he had worked for nearly

twenty years. For a creature of habit such as Klimt, this change in his studio space was certainly difficult to endure, and an impetus to enlist his friend Nähr to document the studio with photographs before its destruction. One photograph from this series shows a visibly cheerful Klimt, standing in front of his studio with a cat in his arms. Klimt was known as a cat-lover. "... six, eight and more cats were always frolicking around" in his garden and studio, according to one visitor, and Klimt "was not able to part with any of his beloved animals."<sup>37</sup> Klimt is dressed in his artist's smock and depicted very much as a lover of animals and nature. Nähr quite consciously uses this aestheticization of Klimt to underscore a harmonious living situation by enlarging a detail of this picture to create an independent image, which he circulated as a kind of portrait study.

Pauline Hamilton was to add a layer of pathos to this Klimtian image of artist-priest, portraying Klimt in artistic rapture, nearly floating above the earth. Little is known about how Klimt came into contact with this photographer from Minneapolis, Minnesota. There is evidence that Hamilton was in Vienna as of 1900 and in 1914 opened a studio at Wiesingerstrasse 3, in the city's first district.<sup>38</sup> The setting for this portrait was presumably the foot of the Roter Berg, in the district of Hietzing, very close to the new studio at Feldmühlgasse 11 that Klimt had moved into in 1912.

#### Snapshot photography – the private Klimt

Photographs of Klimt in a private context have survived in great number and were taken largely during his *Sommerfrische* in Austria's Salzkammergut lake region. Amateur photography of a private nature was very much in fashion at the time and could be done without great technical skill or equipment. Among the higher social classes and in aristocratic circles, in particular, an interest in photography – often in conjunction with a membership at one of the many amateur camera clubs – was *de rigueur*.

The distinguishing characteristic of this kind of photography is that the photographer generally picks out a random moment in time within an event, usually a movement, and preserves it as a snapshot.<sup>39</sup> Another feature is that immediately before the shutter is clicked, the subject strikes a pose. In particular, pictures of family celebrations and costume parties, hikes, and vacation trips were seen as cherished, private mementoes. The photographer did not see himself as a chronicler standing outside the action; rather, he observed the activity from within. For the most part the photographers had family ties to the depicted persons or scene. Since capturing the subject of the picture was the decisive criterion in this type of photography, the authors of these snapshots have remained largely unknown.

The photographs of Gustav Klimt taken during his summer holidays on Lake Attersee should also be seen in this casual context. Today we would refer to these photos – somewhat crudely – as vacation snapshots. They show Klimt, surrounded by his intimate circle of friends, hiking, picnicking, and standing at the lakeside. Most of these photos were taken during Klimt's stays at the Villa Paulick, in the village of Seewalchen. Here, Klimt often had his picture taken, together with Emilie Flöge, while indulging in his favorite pastime, rowing – "to tone up my muscles," as he said.<sup>40</sup> A great many of the photographs taken at that



Emma Bacher, Gustav Klimt and Pauline Flöge on a boat trip on Lake Attersee, 1905  
Austrian National Library/Vienna, Pf 31931 C (7)

37. Pirchan 1942, p. 75.

38. Like Moritz Nähr, Hamilton took portrait pictures outdoors or in the living space of the subjects. For detailed biographical information on her, see Eder 2000/01, p. 50-56.

39. Starl 1995.

40. Gustav Klimt, quoted in Partsch 1996, p. 35.



**Gustav Klimt during the crossing to London together with Karl Otto Czeschka and Fritz Waerndorfer, 1906**  
Austrian National Library/Vienna, Pf 31931 B (2a)



**Gustav Klimt at Schönbrunn Park in Vienna on his way to the Meierei Tivoli, 1914**  
Austrian National Library/Vienna, Pf 31931 C (3)

time were the work of Emma Bacher – the daughter of the villa’s owner, Friedrich Paulick – and the artist Richard Teschner, who had married Emma – the widow of gallery-owner Paul Bacher – in 1911. On numerous occasions Klimt expressed his thanks to the couple for sending him prints. There are, however, no extant photographs of Klimt in the act of painting during his *Sommerfrische* on Lake Attersee.

Klimt only seldom broke with the tradition of spending his *Sommerfrische* in the Austrian countryside (in 1913 for extended holidays on Lake Garda), and in general did not enjoy travelling abroad; his postcards to Emilie Flöge from these journeys are often litanies of annoyances and insecurities. There is photographic documentation of his trip to London in 1906: these pictures, shot in 2¼ × 2¼-inch (6 × 6 cm) format with roll film, are primarily of the Channel crossing on the ship and are fascinating for their precise exposure technique. The snapshots taken of Klimt in Vienna and vicinity provide a glimpse into the artist’s day-to-day habits; that is, they recount short episodes of a life story that has remained only a fragment. Klimt’s daily routine proceeded according to a strict schedule and has also been preserved through photographs. Early each morning (before 6 a.m.), Klimt would leave his apartment on Westbahnstrasse and walk to the Tivoli café, near Schönbrunn Palace, where he had breakfast with his circle of friends and “was, as an illustrious habitué, coddled and pampered.”<sup>41</sup> For thirty years his friend Moritz Nähr accompanied him there. After a hearty breakfast, Klimt trekked through the grounds of the adjacent Schönbrunn Palace to his

41. Moll 1943, quoted in Nebehay 1969, p. 54.



studio, until 1912 on Josefstädter Strasse and later on Feldmühlgasse, in Hietzing, where he shut himself in and worked until evening.

In the period around 1900, costume parties enjoyed a great tradition among the Viennese high society. These affairs were, at the same time, seen as a way of promoting contemporary artists.<sup>42</sup> As a well-known personality, Klimt was a welcome guest at the various parties given by his clients and patrons. One of these was the family of Otto Primavesi, managing director the Wiener Werkstätte from 1915 to 1925, who from 1913 resided with his family in a country estate in Kouty nad Desnou (German: Winkelsdorf), Moravia, built by Josef Hoffmann. Twice each year the Primavesis held their legendary “piggy parties,” a kind of costume party very popular among artists. As one of the entertainments, guests dressed and decorated themselves with fabrics from the Wiener Werkstätte and juxtaposed them in an aesthetic manner with the various wall hangings in the house (also from the Wiener Werkstätte). Gustav Klimt can be seen on one photograph of 1916 in a cassock-like costume made of material with the “Waldidyll” pattern, by Carl Otto Czeschka, which was also used in one of the guest rooms of the Primavesi estate.<sup>43</sup>

Private photographs of Gustav Klimt after 1916, the last year he spent summer holidays on Lake Attersee, are rare. The fate of oblivion also befalls those private snapshots of Gustav Klimt when the circumstances of their creation defy reconstruction and they become an imaginary recollection of events and history.



**Gustav Klimt at a fancy-dress ball at the Primavesi country house in Winkelsdorf, 1916**  
MAK – Austrian Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna

42. Anzenberger/Schögl 2008, p. 112f.

43. Völker 1990, p. 56f.