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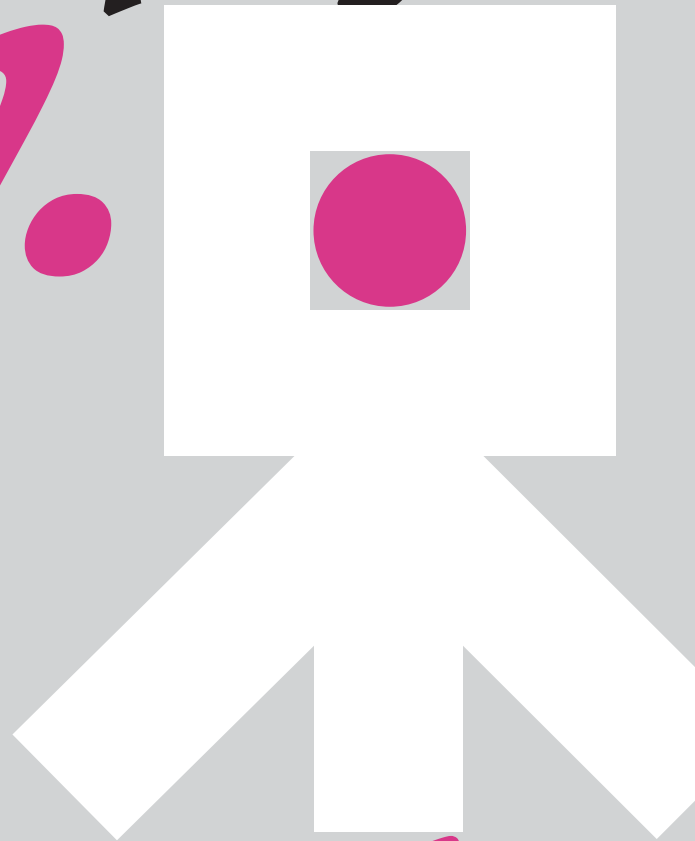
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Moriz Nähr and the Vienna Secession

Interrelationship between Photography and Painting

Uwe Schögl The evolution of Modernism in Vienna in the years around 1900 is closely linked with the activities of the Vienna Secession. Its renewal principles of individually-liberated artistic creativity with an international orientation was just as programmatic as its constructed manifesto of Modernism in the form of an exhibition building (built by Josef Maria Olbrich, 1898) and the publication of the art journal *Ver Sacrum* (issued from 1898 to 1903).¹ The aims of the Vienna Secession were clearly defined; namely, to create a link between contemporary Austrian art and international Modernism through intense exhibition activity.² Until he left the Secession in 1905, Gustav Klimt was the leading figure and founding president (1897–1899) of this glamorous collection of artists whose most prominent actors came from the fields of the fine and applied arts.³ Painting, graphic art, sculpture, handicrafts, and architecture were all given an equal status within an art form elevated to a Gesamtkunstwerk that considered itself the sublimation of all areas of life and society. In doing so the artists of the Vienna Secession are building on the English Arts & Craft Movement's demand for the unity of the arts, meaning equality between high (fine) and low (applied) art. What was the role played by photography within this agenda and how was it integrated into this model of a Gesamtkunstwerk? Which photographic formal principles were employed and in which context did the subject of photography stand to the recognized art forms – mainly, painting – within the Vienna Secession?

In the first year of its publication, *Ver Sacrum* already devoted a contribution to the important *Club der Amateur-Photographen*⁴ that shared the same goals as a (photographic) movement of renewal⁵ (fig. 1). This was followed in 1902 by an invitation being given to the organization, which had since been renamed to the *Camera Club*, to make a presentation within the framework of the 13th Exhibition; this was also to be the first photo exhibition to be held in the rooms in the Vienna Secession.⁶ The determining factor was that several Secession artists were involved in an aesthetic artistic exchange with various amateur photographic societies and that Hugo Henneberg, a significant proponent of artistic photography (Pictorialism),

1. *Ver Sacrum* (Latin for "Sacred Spring") was, in its own definition, the "official organ of the Association of Austrian Artists" (Number 1, January 1898, Imprint). *Ver Sacrum* was originally issued monthly and twice monthly after the third volume; however, in a smaller print run with a normal issue and luxury edition limited to 99 pieces.

2. The Secession organized a total of 24 large-scale exhibitions between 1898 and 1905.

3. The most important founding members from 3 April 1897 included Rudolf Alt, Josef Engelhart, Adolf Hölzel, Josef Hoffmann, Gustav Klimt, Koloman Moser, Alfons M. Mucha, Josef Maria Olbrich and Alfred Roller.

4. The *Club der Amateur-Photographen* was constituted on 31 March 1887 and later renamed *Camera Club*. This forum developed out of the oldest amateur photographer society, the *Photographische Gesellschaft*, that was founded in 1861.

5. *Ver Sacrum*, vol.1, no.4, April 1898, 26: The Vienna Secession welcomed that: "Amateur photography will now be a, not to be underestimated, comrade in propagating the artistic outlook on life in the service of which we stand."

6. The prototype was probably the photo exhibition and exhibition catalogue *Abgüsse nach Werken des Donatello und von Reproduktionen nach Werken des Velasquez* held in the Munich Secession in 1899.

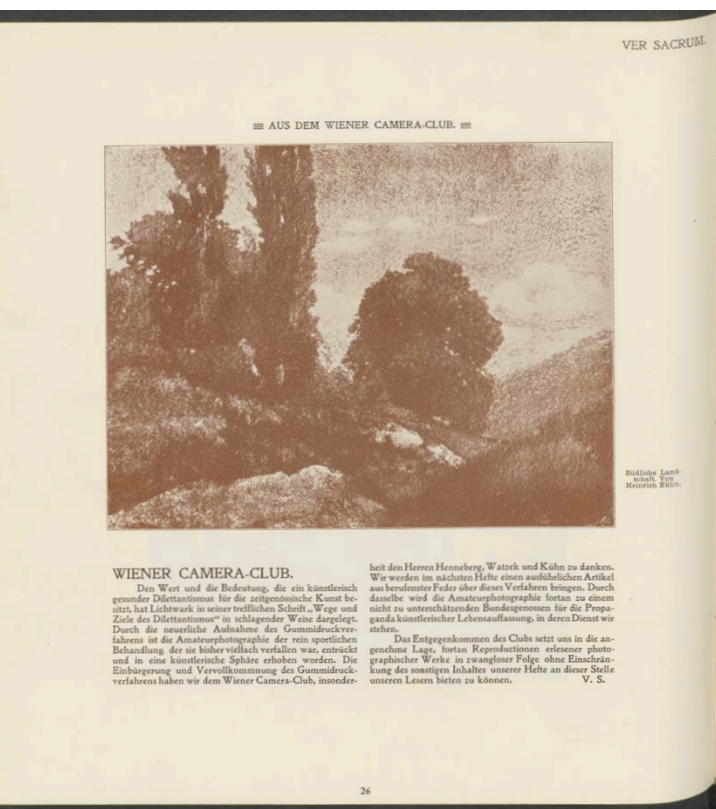


Figure 1
V.S. [Ver Sacrum],
'Aus dem Wiener Camera-Club',
in: *Ver Sacrum*, vol. 1, no. 4, April 1898, 26.

was also in Vienna.⁷ With his function in the collective and on the advisory board of *Ver Sacrum*, Gustav Klimt was extremely well informed of the latest photographic tendencies of his time and made use of the great variety of media-specific qualities of photography for his painting.⁸ Some members of the Secession were actively involved in photography and allowed their photo-aesthetic experiences to enter into their painting and graphic art.⁹

It is astonishing that, in spite of the many interconnections to photography, no amateur photographers from the *Camera Club* or artistic photographers were admitted to the Secession in its founding phase. On the other hand, one aspect was highly regarded within the programme of the Vienna Secession: the medial presentation – above all, in *Ver Sacrum* – of the innovative spatial concepts of the Secession exhibitions through photography. The self-employed photographer Moriz Nähr was officially engaged to accompany the most important exhibitions of the Vienna Secession photographically (including, reproducing paintings).¹⁰ It seems likely that Gustav Klimt introduced Moriz Nähr to the Secession and he began his activity with the new building Josef Maria Olbrich had constructed on the corner of Karlsplatz and the Linke Wienzeile and the founding exhibition that was held there in November 1898 (= 2nd Exhibition 12 November–28 December 1898).¹¹ Moriz Nähr had developed an innovative concept for

photographing interior architecture that enabled him to depict the modern concept of the exhibition design that had been conceived by Koloman Moser and Josef Hofmann with its clearly-structured spaces, reduced presentation of the objects on display, and auratic effects in the corresponding images (fig. 2).¹² From the very beginning, the Secession recognized

7. A. v. Loehr, 'Die Malerei mit der Platte', in: *Ver Sacrum*, vol. 1, no. 7, July 1898, 32. "Die Ehre, diesen Weg gangbar gemacht zu haben, gebührt dem Wiener Camera-Club, und zwar den Herren Doctor Henneberg, Kühn und Professor Watzek, und hierdurch ist die Photographie erst wirklich ein künstlerisches Darstellungsmittel geworden." Hugo Henneberg, who had been a member of the British professional photographer society *The Linked Ring* since 1894, was mainly responsible for international contacts. See also: Monika Faber, 'Hugo Henneberg – Meister des fotografischen Stimmungsbilds', in: Christian Philipsen (ed.), *Gustav Klimt & Hugo Henneberg. Zwei Künstler der Wiener Secession*, exh. cat., Cologne 2018, 177–194, especially 179f (exhibition Kunstmuseum Moritzburg, Halle (Saale), 14 October 2018 – 06 January 2019).

8. *The Studio* (ed. by Charles Holme), which was first published in 1893 and issued a special number dealing with *Art in photography* in 1905, was one of the art journals that was well-known by the editors of *Ver Sacrum*. See also: Uwe Schögl, 'Gustav Klimt in Contemporary Photographs', in: Tobias G. Natter, Franz Smola, Peter Weinhäupl (eds.), *Klimt: Up Close and Personal. Paintings – Letters – Insights*, exh. cat., Vienna 2012, 84–97 (exhibition Leopold Museum, Vienna 24 February – 27 August 2012).

9. Special attention should be drawn to the painter Johann Victor Krämer and graphic artist and President of the Secession (1915/16) Ferdinand Schmutzer, who kept his photographic oeuvre secret throughout his life. See: Regina Maria Anzenberger, Uwe Schögl (eds.), *Ferdinand Schmutzer. Photographic Works 1894–1928*, Munich 2008.

10. Moriz Nähr's photographic activities with the *Vienna Secession* began with the association's second exhibition in 1898 at the latest. Moriz Nähr was also entrusted with reproducing the exhibited works so that they could be printed in journals.

11. The First Exhibition of the Secession was held in rented rooms in the Gartenbaugebäude (Parking 12, Vienna, destroyed) on 25 March 1898. The Second Exhibition [12 November – 28 December 1898] was the first to be held in the building constructed by Josef Maria Olbrich on the corner of Karlsplatz and the Linke Wienzeile.

12. For the first detailed presentation of the photographer Moriz Nähr, see: Uwe Schögl, Hans Peter Wipplinger (eds.), *Moriz Nähr: Photographer of Viennese Modernism*, exh. cat., Vienna 2018, 26–32 (exhibition Leopold Museum, Vienna, 24 August – 29 October 2018).



Figure 2
Moriz Nähr, Left side hall of the 18th
Exhibition of the Vienna Secession
(known as Klimt Exhibition), albumen print.
Austrian National Library,
Picture Archives and Graphics Department,
inv. Pk 2539,192.

the extreme importance of the broad impact that the photographs of their innovative exhibition stagings could produce in the media.¹³ The visual implementation of (photo)graphic illustrations in the magazine *Ver Sacrum* was of great importance to the Secessionists,

equal to their public exhibitions. Even before the first issue of the magazine was published, Alfred Roller (later president of the Vienna Secession, 1902) wrote to Gustav Klimt: “The association has two means of reaching the public: the exhibitions and V. S. [*Ver Sacrum*] [...] every V. S. issue is a small exhibition, while V. S. itself is a very large one.”¹⁴

The founding of the Secession in 1897 also marked the beginning of the friendship between Gustav Klimt and Moriz Nähr that would last until the artist’s death. By making an extensive investigation of the evidence that is available to us, this essay intends to display that the work of these two proponents of Modernism contains many aspects of affinity and interrelationship.¹⁵ This will be shown by focusing on selected groups of works by Moriz Nähr and Gustav Klimt and studying their genesis, representation mechanisms and original context. In-depth studies of the medial interrelationship between painting (visual art) and photography within the framework of Viennese Modernism in the years around 1900 – in an international comparison – must still be considered a desideratum of photographic research.¹⁶

Painterly aspects in Moriz Nähr’s photography

Moriz Nähr is among the photographers at the time of Viennese Modernism who, owing to the independent character of his works, his unconventional occupational profile and his social network, enjoyed a wide sphere of influence. Moriz Nähr had a twofold professional training: as a painter and photographer. He studied painting at the two most important academies in Vienna, the Imperial Royal School of Arts and Crafts, present-day University of Applied Arts Vienna (1876/77) and as a guest auditor at the Imperial Royal Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (1878/79), but gave up his studies at both after two or three semesters. Nähr achieved his technical skills in photography in a one-year apprenticeship under his

13. A comprehensive photo documentation of the exhibitions in the *Vienna Secession* from 1897 to 1905 [1. – 24. Vienna Secession Exhibitions] with 240 vintage prints, see: Picture Archives and Graphics Department of the Austrian National Library, Vienna, inv. Pk 2539, 1-240.

14. Albertina, Klimt Archives, inv. GKA46, quoted from Stephan Üner, *Die Kunst der Präsentation. Koloman Moser als Ausstellungsgestalter*, Vienna 2016 [doctoral thesis], 47.

15. The first comprehensive presentation of the work was given in the exhibition *Moriz Nähr- Photographer of Viennese Modernism* curated by the author of this contribution at the Leopold Museum, Vienna in 2018 [see reference 12].

16. Leonie Beiersdorf (ed.), *Leinwand: Malerei und Fotografie im 19. Jahrhundert*, exh. cat., Nuremberg 2018, especially 265-292 [exhibition Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, 10 May – 9 September 2018].

older brother Karl Nähr, who had a studio in Schemnitz in Hungary (present-day Banská Stiavnica/Slovakia). Unconventionally, the 25-year-old Moriz Nähr decided to become active as a freelance photographer sometime around 1885. Rather than keeping a conventional photographic studio (for his occasional portrait commissions, which would have guaranteed his financial security), he had workshops in his series of apartments in Vienna's Neubau district (Neustiftgasse 11, Sigmundsgasse 5, Burggasse 33 and Siebensterngasse 30). On city walks through Vienna he photographed genre and urban scenes, but he mostly focused on landscape photography in the Austrian capital and its surroundings.

Moriz Nähr's artistic breakthrough occurred at the 1891 *International Exhibition of Artistic Photography*, in which Alfred Stieglitz was one of more than 80 other participants. Modelled on the English Arts and Crafts movement, the exhibition provided Vienna with the decisive impulse that resulted in an aesthetic renewal and the recognition of photography as a free and independent form of art.¹⁷ Nähr was represented with 15 exhibits at the show that displayed a total of 600 photographs.¹⁸ His works bore titles such as *Forest Interior*, *Waterfall*, *Tree Study* and *From the Prater* and a selection of them was subsequently published in the *Amateur-Kunst* portfolio in recognition of the quality of his work. From that time on, Moriz Nähr, as a member of the free amateur movements of the *Photographische Gesellschaft*, moved in the circles of the bourgeois upper classes of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that were among the organizations' most prominent members and greatly increased his social standing. His early social networks to those members of Viennese high aristocracy that were interested in art¹⁹ – and especially to the family of the industrial tycoon Karl Wittgenstein and his son, the philosopher Ludwig that soon developed into a life-long friendship – assured him of his livelihood and fostered his contacts to avant-garde artistic movements.

It is conspicuous that the most productive creative period of his oeuvre from the 1890s to the late 1920s coincides with his most intensive artistic and social interrelationships with the Wittgenstein family and the Vienna Secession around Gustav Klimt. Here, the decisive framework was provided by the industrialist Karl Wittgenstein who, as an important financier and collector of works by members of the Vienna Secession, invited a group of the most renowned artist and musicians to his salons at which Moriz Nähr also took an active part. Nähr developed an intense friendship to Karl Wittgenstein's family and his children, as well

17. See the contribution by Ulla Fischer-Westhauser in this publication, page 35ff.

18. Jacob Ritter von Falke/Josef Maria Eder, *Amateur-Kunst. 37 Photogravuren nach Naturaufnahmen aus der unter dem höchsten Protectorate Ihrer Kaiserlichen Hoheit, der durchlauchtigsten Frau Erzherzogin Maria Theresia [of Braganza], veranstalteten Internationalen Ausstellung Künstlerischer Photographien zu Wien 1891*, Vienna 1891, 1.

19. It is notable that Moriz Nähr received sporadic commissions from the Austrian Imperial Household and the House of Habsburg: Hunting photographs were already made for Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria in 1897 and, in 1908, the successor to the throne Franz Ferdinand named Moriz Nähr 1908 "Court Photographer of His Serene Imperial Royal Highness Archduke Franz Ferdinand".



Figure 3
Folk dance in the Alps, collotype,
colorized postcard c. 1900. Private collection,
Vienna.



Figure 4
Josef Engelhart, *Ball at the Drying Loft*, 1890,
oil on canvas. WienMuseum, Vienna.

as to Klara Wittgenstein (Karl's sister), that is shown to have continued until the late 1920s.²⁰ Around 1928/29, Karl's youngest son, the famous philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, called on Nähr for the photographic implementation of his composite photography and encouraged Nähr to make his comprehensive documentation of the construction of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House that, as an erratic series, is counted among Austria's most important photographic records today.²¹

Genesis of the works and visual strategy

In addition to the principal photographic motifs of the landscape and city development (urban landscape) and architecture (Vienna Secession), Moriz Nähr also showed an interest in the life of Vienna's streets and markets although this subject only appears rarely and in single motifs in his oeuvre. An exception is the 30-part series showing the "Old Naschmarkt" from the early days of his activity (c. 1885).

Shortly before 1909, Moriz Nähr once again devoted himself to this topos with a scenic depiction of a dancing party in the garden of an inn near Vienna. The complicated process of the pictorial invention based on a single photograph that was presented in its final version at the *Internationale Photographischen Ausstellung Dresden 1909* under the title of *Kirchtagtanz* is particularly noteworthy. This mammoth photographic show that, with its more than 1600 exhibitors, could be described as a "World's Fair of Photography" was held in the Exhibition Palace in the Grand Garden in Dresden (1 May to 10 October). Austria participated with a representative special exhibition for which Otto Prutscher designed a separate pavilion complete with its interior decoration. In keeping with the credo of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the cover of the catalogue (which was executed by the *Wiener Werkstätte*) was also designed by Otto Prutscher.²²

It appears that Nähr received impulses from both photography and painting for the way he dealt with the subject of the dance. Popular dance scenes were a common motif in snapshot photography around 1900 (fig. 3) and also a frequent theme in painting. Josef Engelhart

20. Moriz Nähr and Ludwig Wittgenstein already corresponded in August 1920, when Ludwig Wittgenstein worked as assistant gardener at Klosterneuburg Monastery; Austrian National Library, Vienna, Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, inv. Autograph 1275/6-1 (29th Sept. 1920).

21. Uwe Schögl 2018 (reference 12), 42-47.

22. Franziska Brons, *Exposition eines Mediums. Internationale Photographische Ausstellung Dresden 1909*, Paderborn 2015, see, in particular, chapter 3 'Im Zeichen des Dekors: Photographie und Raumkunst', 94-99.



Figure 5
Moriz Nähr, *Fair Dance*,
silver-bromide gelatin paper 26.8 x 39.7 cm.
Collection Fotografis, Vienna, inv. FF 3/1-21/2.

(1864–1941) had created a spectacular example of this genre and it must have been well known to Nähr (fig. 4). Engelhart and Nähr had both been members of the loose Bohemian artists' society, the *Hagengesellschaft*, since the early 1880s. The two protagonists had a similar approach to artistic matters and concept of art and nature, and belonged to the melting pot of the so-called "Naturalists" in the Vienna Secession that Engelhart led as its president in 1910.²³

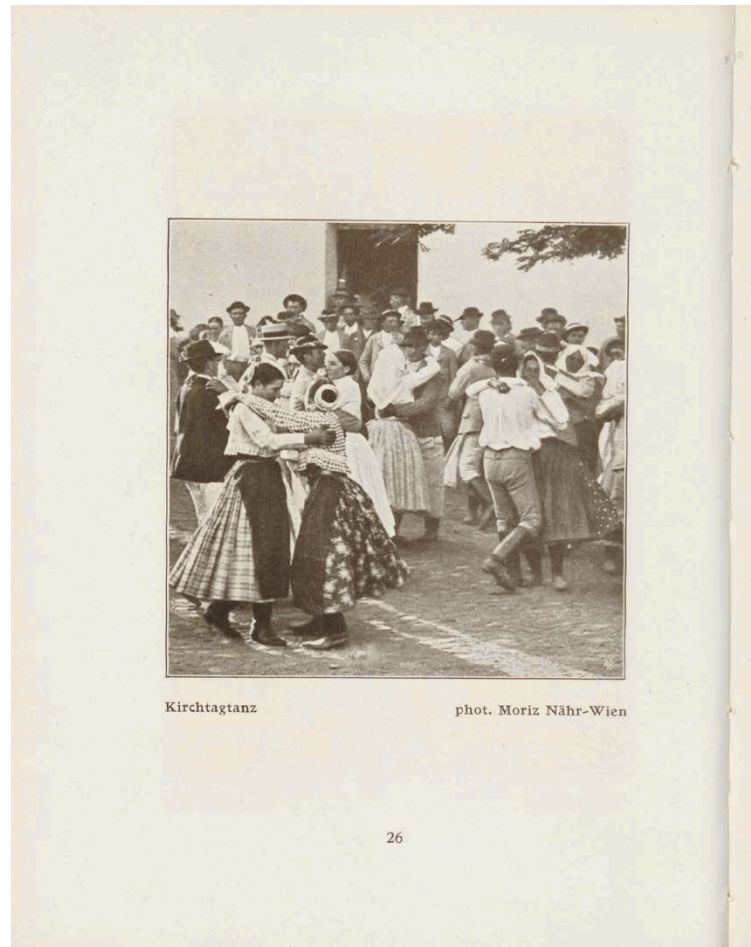
Nähr formally developed the subject of the *Kirchtagtanz* as the genesis of his composition that has its origin in a single photograph (fig. 5). This print provides information on the place where the photograph was taken, the date and subject of the image: The dance took place in the open air at the brick factory in Mannersdorf on the March River – today, the border between Austria and the Slovak Republic – around 40km from Vienna, as the crow flies. The

23. Uwe Schögl (reference 12), 100–103.



Figure 6
Moriz Nähr, *Fair Dance*,
silver-bromide gelatin print 57 x 46 cm,
signed b.r.: „M.NÄHR. 1909.
Private collection, Vienna.

Figure 7
Moriz Nähr, 'Kirchtagtanz' (Fair Dance), 1909,
reproduced in: *Catalogue of the Austrian special
exhibition at the International Photographic
Exhibition in Dresden 1909, Vienna 1909, 26.*



name of the partners who owned the factory can be seen in the inscription “DAMPFZIEGELEI -GUTMANN - BOSCHAN”, as can the adjacent drinking and eating place that is simply named as a “Gasthaus”.²⁴ The brick factory was closed in 1909 due to social abuses.

It is possible to reconstruct the genesis of *Kirchtagtanz* with the help of a vintage print in a private collection in Vienna that was authorized by Nähr (fig. 6), and two intermediate negatives from the estate of Moriz Nähr's family:²⁵ For the final variant of the picture that was presented at Dresden in 1909, Nähr chose an extremely small detail that he generated over two intermediate negatives (fig. 7).²⁶ They were then used to manipulate the motif of the image, step-by-step, to greatly condense the narrative structure to the extent that the contextualization to the place of the activity was eliminated. With this enlargement of the detail, Nähr produced a decontextualization of location and content to the benefit of a free compositional depiction: the composition of the image or – more precisely – the focus placed on the elements of movement of the dance as a (compositional) opponent to the background of the image takes centre stage. This appears in a peaceful chiaroscuro structure with the black

24. The brickworks ran as „Gutmann, Boschan & Cie“ since 1872 and were closed in 1909, in: 'Ziegelöfen und Lehmabbau der politischen Bezirke Mistelbach und Gänserndorf (Niederösterreich): Geschichte und Geologie', *Archiv für Lagerstättenforschung der geologischen Bundesanstalt*, Vienna 2014, 50f, see: <https://opac.geologie.ac.at/ais312/dokumente/ALF_27_Ziegelbuch_mit_Beilage.pdf> [24.01.2019].

25. The Gustav Klimt | Wien 1900 – Private Foundation, Vienna, acquired part of the estate of Moriz Nähr, consisting of 111 glass negatives, in 2017. Inv. KF S188/1-111.

26. The two intermediate negatives inv. KF S188/12 and KF S188/13 from The Gustav Klimt | Wien-1900 – Private Foundation, Vienna were first published in: Uwe Schögl, 102 (see reference 12).

quadrat, which originally depicted the door of the gasthaus, and the bright wall.²⁷ Here, the minimized (photographic) narrative structure and image composition (in the sense of painting) enter into an effective symbiosis aimed at the dissolution of media-specific differentiation. The principles of painting and photography become equalized in *Kirchtagtanz*.

Moriz Nähr and Gustav Klimt – photography and painting

The widespread interest around 1900 in the interactions between painting and photography played a major role in the inspiration that the two protagonists Moriz Nähr and Gustav Klimt derived from each other, which can be verified in certain instances. Nähr's unconventional interpretation of a Klimt portrait, created during the *International Kunstschau Vienna* held in 1909, clearly shows the influence of Klimt's early portraits on Nähr's portrait photography through a reductive notion of form, design and habitus.

Klimt, who was interested in photography in various ways, in turn, was inspired by Nähr with regards motifs and adopted specific photographic means of expression as compositional design principles in his paintings, such as irradiation of contours in contre-jour, for example in *Pine Forest I* and *II*. The following analysis shows in detail how close the mutual affirmation and interaction of image-specific means of expression can lie. The cases are intended to act as examples for a differentiated analysis of the interaction between (artistic) photography and painting in Jugendstil.

At the *13th Secession Exhibition* shown from February to March 1902, the paintings *Pine Forest I* and *Pine Forest II* by Gustav Klimt were presented to the public for the first time (figs. 8 & 9). Both paintings are dated to 1901 by Klimt researchers and are part of a group of five forest paintings executed by the artist between 1901 and 1904. According to Ludwig Hevesi, the most important chronicler of the Vienna Secession, the collective exhibition of Austrian and German artists featured “four to five very similar pine forest motifs” by various painters, but Hevesi was adamant that “by far the richest, most delicate and also the most skillful are Klimt's. His are also the most poetical in terms of painterly ideas.”²⁸ In his review, Ludwig Hevesi discussed the paintings *Pine Forest I* and *II*, which are similar in style and composition, in great detail, elaborating especially on the reflections of light in *Pine Forest II*: “In one of his two forest paintings, which on first glance appear to show merely dark thicket, we may observe delicate rays of light breaking through the gaps. In one place, a very narrow,

27. The prepress stage of *Kirchtagtanz* for the catalogue of the 1909 exhibition further stresses the homogeneity of the bright wall through retouching: Albertina, Vienna, permanent loan from the Höhere Graphischen Bundes- und Versuchsanstalt, Vienna, inv. GLV2000/1275.

28. Ludwig Hevesi on 13th February 1902, quoted from Tobias Natter (ed.): *Gustav Klimt – sämtliche Gemälde*, Cologne 2017, 521f.



Figure 8
Moriz Nähr, Exhibition room at the 13th
Exhibition of the Vienna Secession, 1902,
glossy collodion paper, sheet size 24.6×19.6cm,
underlay carton 25.1×33cm.
Austrian National Library, Picture Archives
and Graphics Department, inv. Pk 2539,95.
On the right outside: *Pine Forest II* (1901)
by Gustav Klimt.

Figure 9
Gustav Klimt, *Pine Forest I*, 1901,
oil on canvas 90.5 x 90 cm. Kunsthaus Zug,
Stiftung Sammlung Kamm.

irregular opening appears, like the thin gap between a door and frame, at intervals dark and obscured”.²⁹ While Hevesi was entirely right in his observation that the paintings share the same motif,³⁰ his impressive description overlooked the fact that both versions render the same lighting, the only difference being that *Pine Forest I* only shows intermittent reflections of light (in the upper corner to the right of the center), while *Pine Forest II* features additional narrow influxes of light (“opening”) on the left side of the depiction. Klimt’s renderings of forests in his early landscape oeuvre were certainly influenced by the Symbolist landscapes of Fernand Khnopff, which were on display at the Vienna Secession in 1898,³¹ while we must also take into account that, at the time, this theme was taken up by painters and photographers all over Europe.³²

Aside from a biographically motivated interpretation,³³ Klimt’s *Pine Forest I* allows us to establish an intermedia connection to photography, and, more specifically, to a photograph

29. See reference 26.

30. Tobias Natter follows Ludwig Hevesi’s interpretation, in: reference 28, 521.

31. Michel Draguet, ‘Khnopff und Klimt’, in: *Gustav Klimt – Josef Hoffmann. Pioniere der Moderne*, Agnes Husslein-Arco, Alfred Weidinger (eds.), exh. cat., Munich 2011, 259 [exhibition Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, 25 October 2011–4 March 2012].

32. Stephan Koja first referred in a general manner to the cross-references between Klimt’s landscapes and the photographic oeuvre of Hugo Henneberg and Heinrich Kühn, in: *Gustav Klimt. Landschaften*, Stephan Koja (ed.), exh. cat.

Munich 2002, 34f [exhibition Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, 23 October 2002–23 February 2003].

33. Alfred Weidinger mentioned Klimt’s early morning walks in the woods surrounding Litzlberg during his summer sojourns, in: *Gustav Klimt. 150 Jahre*, Agnes Husslein-Arco, Alfred Weidinger. (eds.), Vienna 2012, 178 [exhibition Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, 13 July 2012–6 January 2013].



Figure 10

Moriz Nähr, *Forest Interior*, c. 1890,
gelatin silver reprint from gelatin silver dry
plate (glass negative).

The Gustav Klimt / Wien 1900 –
Private Foundation, Vienna, inv. KF S188/82.

created by Moriz Nähr as early as 1890.³⁴ The compositional similarities between the painting and the photograph are striking, for both works show a stringent structure of towering pine trees with differing chromatic and spatial density. (figs. 9 & 10) The defining connection resides in the special lighting of the painting, which renders an effect immanent to the medium of photography: the exaggerated light effect in the upper part of the trees, produced by a backlit shot as seen in Nähr's photograph, can be found in both versions of Klimt's *Pine Forest* as a play of (back)light; appearing as radiant and glowing dots of light in version I, and in *Pine Forest II* as narrow gaps of light "like the thin gap between a door and frame." Gustav Klimt applied this optical phenomenon of contre-jour, which cannot be perceived by the human eye, in *Pine Forest I*, and modified and elaborated it in *Pine Forest II*. *Pine Forest I* was at times also known as *Forest Interior*, as *Cedar Wood* and *Spruce Forest*.³⁵ In terms of their pictorial content, the two *Pine Forest* versions are very closely related to the photograph created by Nähr, who with

34. The Gustav Klimt / Wien 1900 – Private Foundation glass negative, inv. KF S188/85.

35. Fritz Novotny, Johannes Dobai, *Gustav Klimt*, Salzburg 1967, 119.



Figure 11
Moriz Nähr, Old Castle in Laxenburg,
Garden front, c. 1910,
gelatin silver print 20.4 x 26.3 cm.
IMAGNO Brandstätter Images, Vienna.

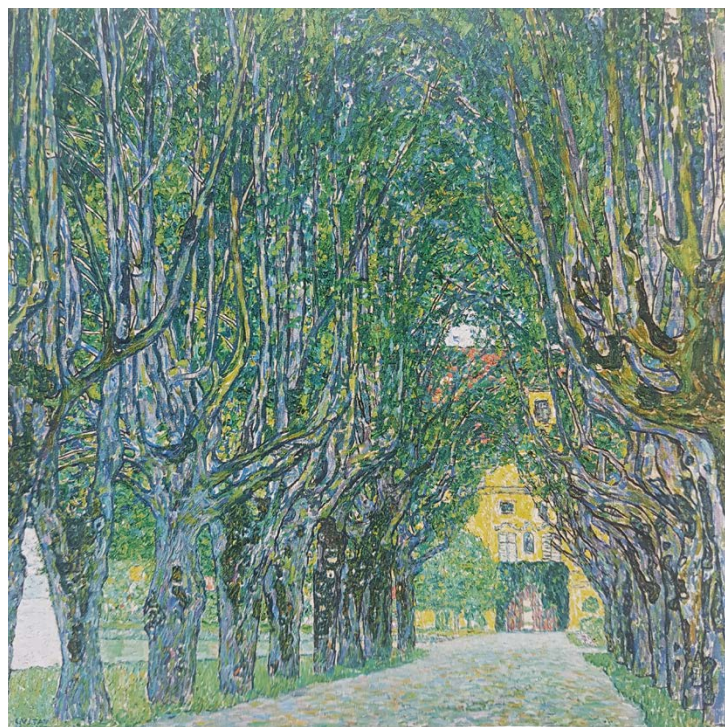


Figure 12
Gustav Klimt,
Avenue in Front of Kammer Castle, 1912,
oil on canvas 110 x 110 cm.
Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.

his landscape photographs wanted to turn away from an idealistic observation of nature in favor of a naturalism. *Pine Forest I* is a wholly balanced and tranquil composition in keeping with a sensitive artistic approach to nature that makes the world of things its subject – a sort of “nature lyricism” which is reflected in Klimt’s conception of nature in his early landscapes. In his subsequent forest depictions *Beech Forest I* (1902) and *Birch Forest (Beech Forest)* (1904) Klimt turned towards Impressionist-informed pictorial structures increasingly based on color.

Another instance of Nähr’s photo-specific design elements influencing Klimt’s oeuvre is the photograph *Old Castle in Laxenburg*, which inspired Klimt’s 1912 painting *Avenue in Front of Kammer Castle* both in terms of motif and composition (figs. 11 & 12). During his summer stay on Lake Atter in 1912, Klimt painted *Avenue in Front of Kammer-Castle*. In this work, Klimt was

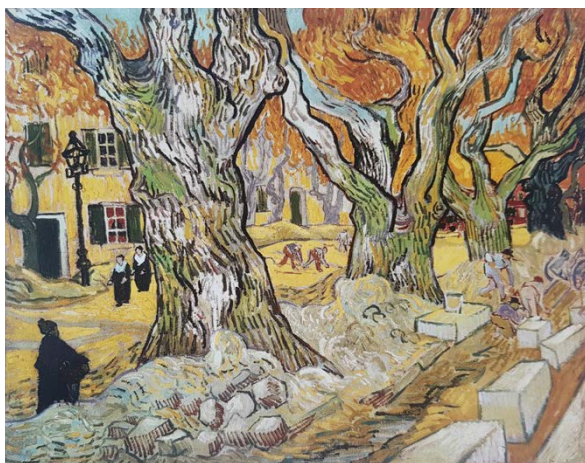


Figure 13
Vincent Van Gogh,
Roadworkers in Saint-Rémy, 1889,
oil on canvas. The Phillips Collection,
Washington, D.C.

completely influenced by Vincent van Gogh’s painting *Street Workers in Saint Rémy*,³⁶ which had been shown in a major Van Gogh exhibition held in the Galerie Miethke in Vienna in 1906, in respect to the formal principle of a linear-painterly sense of style (fig. 13). However, the motivic stimulation provided by Moriz Nähr for “Kammer Castle” is also unmistakable. Many years before, Nähr had photographed the garden side of Laxenburg Castle – probably in connection with a visit to Klara Wittgenstein, one of his patrons, who lived in the building. The close motivic relationship between Klimt’s painting and Nähr’s photograph is immediately noticeable: The central-perspectival, almost symmetrical, spatial shortening created by the avenue of trees virtually focuses the viewers gaze on the façade of the castle that, with its planar depiction, acts as a compositional counterpoint of peace.

36. See reference 33, 248,

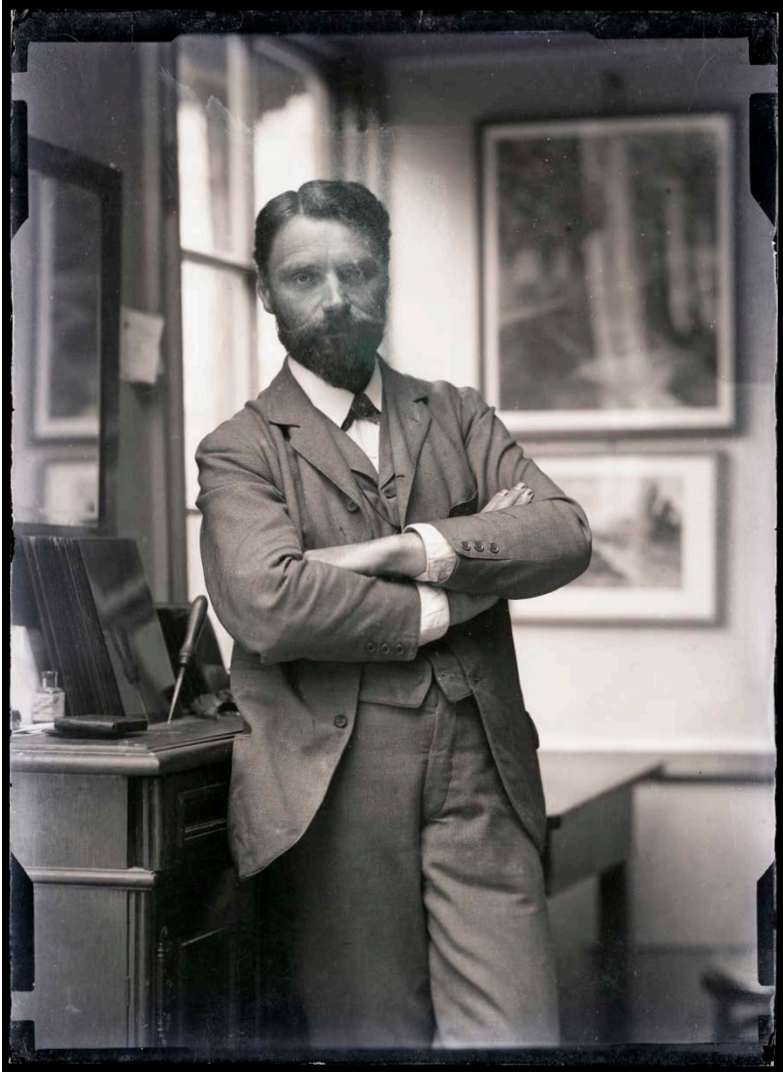


Figure 14
Moriz Nähr, Self-Portrait at the Photographer's
Living Room and Workspace, c. 1900,
gelatin silver reprint from gelatin silver dry
plate (glass negative). The Gustav Klimt | Wien
1900 – Private Foundation, Vienna,
inv. KF S188/31.

The friendly and animated exchange between the two artists certainly indicates this, without trying to provide proof of a motivic implication. Gustav Klimt lived near Moritz Nähr's home and many of the walks they made together through the city of Vienna over more than two decades started there. In contrast to the conventions of the time, Moriz Nähr did not store his glass plates in his darkroom but in cupboards in his living quarters and numerous framed enlarged prints (fig. 14) showing a selection of his favourite motifs hung on the walls in his apartment. It is a well-known fact that Gustav Klimt drew his inspiration from a wide range of visual impressions and stylistic idioms – paintings by artists he admired, the landscape motifs on Lake Atter, and from the aesthetics of photography.