



GUSTAV KLIMT 1862–1918

1862

Gustav Klimt was born in Baumgarten near Vienna, on July 14, the son of Ernst Klimt, a goldsmith.

1876–1883

At the age of 14, Klimt entered the Vienna School for Applied Arts. Like his younger brother Ernst, he studied to become an instructor in drawing. After two years he switched to the specialty of painter of decorations.

1886–88

Together with Franz Matsch, the Klimt brothers formed a joint atelier called the Artists Company, which met with great success. In 1882/3 they teamed with the architects Ferdinand Hellmer and Hermann Helmer to decorate various theaters in commission from the Imperial Habsburg Monarchy.

1886–88

The Artists Company painted the ceiling decorations for the right hand Festival Staircase of the Vienna Burgtheater to critical acclaim.

1890–91

The Artists Company experienced their greatest triumph with the wall paintings of the grand stairway of the Vienna Art History Museum.

1892

After the death of his father and his brother Ernst, Klimt experienced a personal crisis, and turned increasingly to the artistic style known as Symbolism.

1894

Klimt and Matsch received the commission to execute the ceiling paintings depicting allegories of the sciences, the so-called *Faculty Paintings*, for the Great Hall of Vienna University. Klimt was to paint allegories of Philosophy, Medicine, and Jurisprudence.



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1897

Klimt was elected President of the newly founded Vienna Secession.

1898

Klimt designed the poster for the first Secession exhibition and drew numerous illustrations for their periodical *Ver Sacrum (Sacred Spring)*. His portrait painting *Sonja Knips* was the first of his many Modernist portraits of women.

1900

The presentation of his first *Faculty Painting, Philosophy*, at the Secession caused great controversy. Klimt's innovative depiction of nude figures was deemed distasteful by the public and the press. The painting was awarded a gold medal at the Paris World Exhibition.

1901

The presentation of his second *Faculty Painting, Medicine* caused increasing censure of his art.

1902

Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze* in the 14th Secession exhibition, the *Beethoven Exhibition*, marked his turn towards a new monumental style. His representation of the human figure focused upon outline and geometrically disposed poses and gestures.

1903

Klimt traveled to Italy and was inspired by the Byzantine mosaics at Ravenna. At the 18th Secession exhibition which was dedicated to his work alone, Klimt presented the *Faculty Painting, Jurisprudence*. The foundation of the *Vienna Ateliers (Wiener Werkstätte)* by Joseph Hoffmann, Kolo Moser and Fritz Waerndorfer led to a new phase in the creation of *Total Art Work (Gesamtkunstwerk)*.

1905

Klimt bought back his *Faculty Paintings*, which had been rejected by the University. (In 1945 they were burned along with many other important works by Klimt in Immendorf castle in Lower Austria.) Together with a group of other like minded artists, Klimt withdrew from the Secession.

1908

Klimt opened the Vienna Art Show (*Wiener Kunstschau*), in which he exhibited 16 major works of his *Golden Style*, among which were *The Kiss* and *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*.

1909

In the second international Vienna Art Show, Klimt was elected president and exhibited further new work. He made a trip to Paris which brought new influences in his art and ended his *Golden Style*.

1910

His erotic drawings exhibited in Gallery Miethke brought accusations of pornography.

1911

In the International Art Exhibition in Rome, Klimt won first prize for his painting *Death and Life*. He traveled to Brussels to supervise the installation of his mosaic frieze in the Stocklet Palace.

1912

Klimt moved into his final atelier in Hietzing.

1912–13

Klimt participated in exhibitions in Dresden, Budapest, Munich and Mannheim. His painting and drawing styles became exceptionally loose.

1914–18

World War I suppressed the artistic life of Europe. Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka and Anton Faistauer and Klimt took part in the Austrian division of the Berlin Secession Exhibition.

1916–17

Klimt was made honorary member of the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden as well as the Academy of Fine Arts of Vienna. He prepared for an exhibition in Stockholm.

1918

Klimt had a stroke on January 11 and died on February 6. He was buried in Hietzing Cemetery.