

Art around 1900 in Central Europe

#9 Art collections

Karolina Dzimira-Zarzycka

Jakub Zarzycki

translated by Agata Walny



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
WIRTH INSTITUTE FOR AUSTRIAN
AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN STUDIES



Art around 1900 in Central Europe

In this popular culture series we will examine one of the most inspiring moments in the history of European culture.

The turn of the 19th and 20th century was a **special period for the art of Central Europe**, with various artistic trends occurring in a short time and an intensified cultural exchange between countries politically connected with the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

We will deal with paintings, architecture and sculpture, but also other important cultural phenomena, such as international exhibitions and art collections. We present a panorama of **the Belle Époque** by comparing artists from Central European countries.

Gustav Klimt (AT), *Serena Pulitzer Lederer*, 1899,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



The beginnings of art collecting

The beginnings of modern collecting date back to the 18th century. There were great royal and aristocratic estates dating back earlier, but it was only in the **Enlightenment** that people began to show an interest in art from an **educational** point of view and begin to **systematically collect art**.

Art history and **archaeology** were also shaped at this time. The German researcher Johann Joachim Winckelmann was the first to analyse ancient art by dividing works into categories and to introduce a division of styles.

Anton von Maron (AT), *Portrait of Johann Joachim Winckelmann*, 1768, Klassik Stiftung Weimar



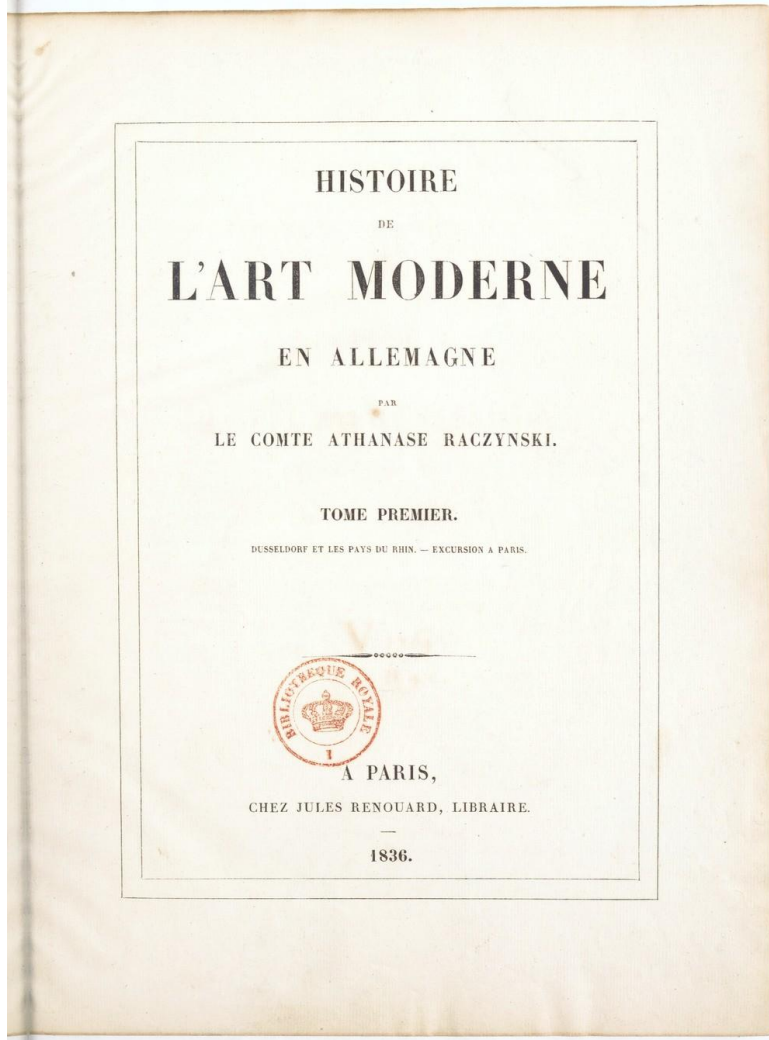
Many other researchers and hobbyist-amateurs followed his lead – however this was mainly available to **wealthy men and women**, such as Stanisław Kostka Potocki and Izabela Czartoryska. They created their own collections, made inventories and published catalogues.



Kazimierz Wojniakowski (PL), *Portrait of Izabela Czartoryska*, 1796, National Museum in Cracow

Before the first departments of art history and archaeology were established at universities, it was the collectors who played an important role in **art research**.

For example, Atanazy Raczyński, was interested in contemporary German painting and opened a gallery in Berlin in 1836.



Title page from Atanazy Raczyński's *Histoire de l'Art Moderne en Allemagne*, Paris 1836, National Library of France

What to collect?

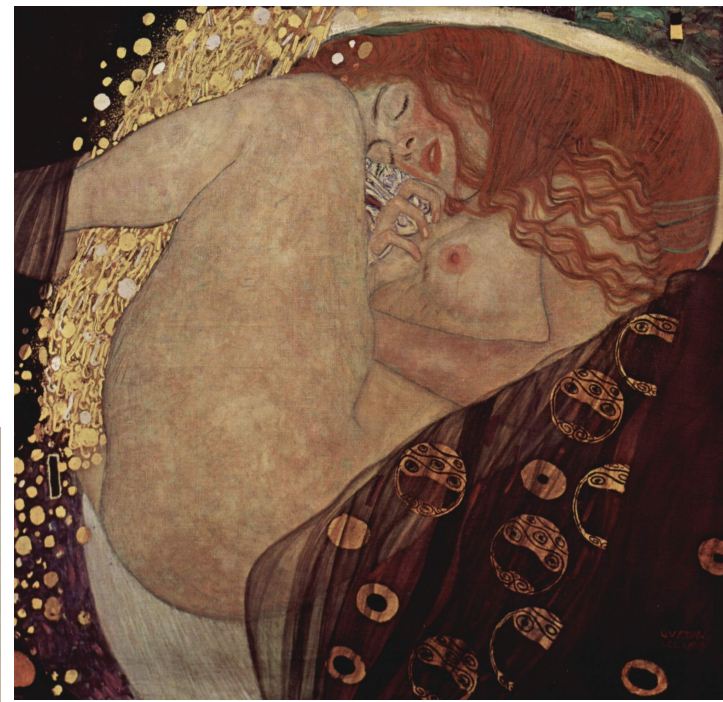
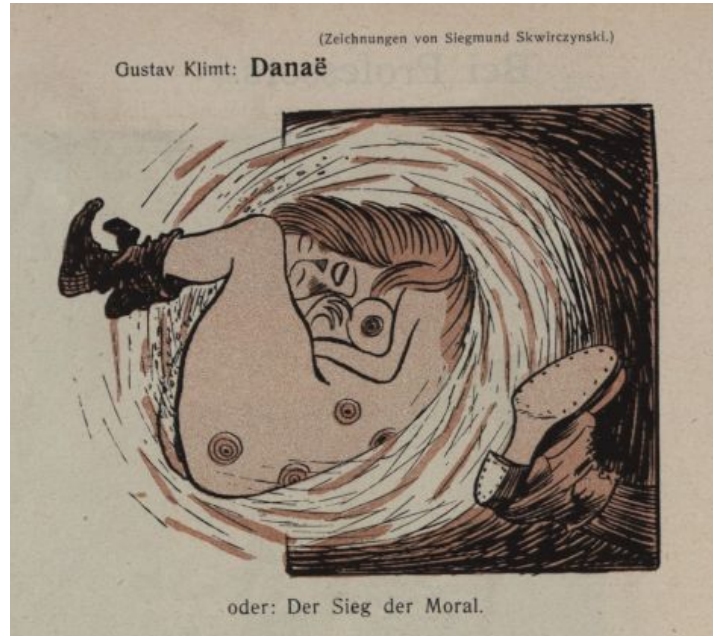
In the 19th century, the canon of art collection was established. Collectors were therefore interested in the paintings of the **old masters** (from the 13th–18th centuries). They were divided into “schools” – Italian, Flemish, but also French and German.

Another area of interest was **antiques** – primarily Roman copies of Greek sculptures, but also vases.

Interior of the hall with “antiquities” in the Wilanów Palace, woodcut print from the catalogue *Willanów. Album widoków i pamiątek oraz kopie obrazów...*, Warsaw 1877, National Library in Warsaw



There was also an interest in painting and sculpture of living artists. Art around 1900 is a canon for us, the value of which no one doubts. At that time, however, it aroused heated disputes among critics, just like **contemporary art** today.



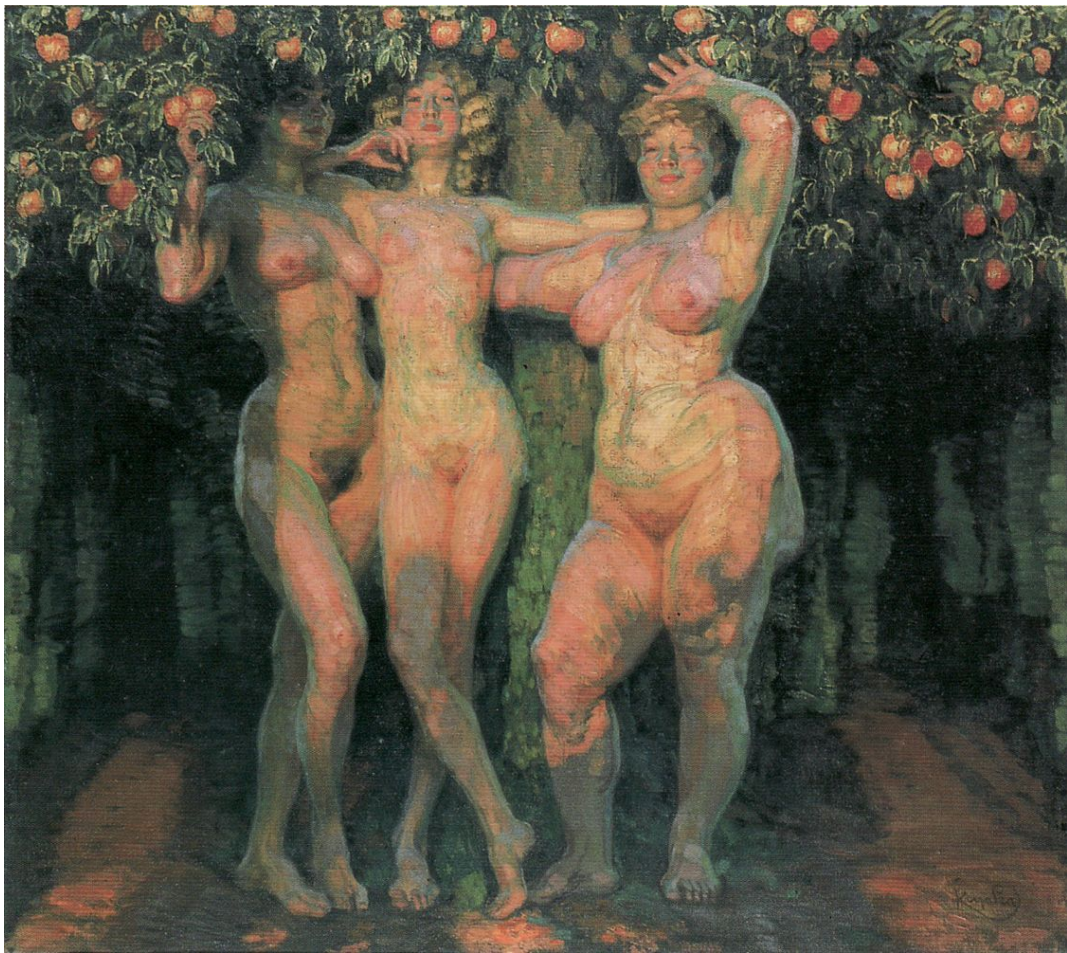
Gustav Klimt (AT), *Danaë*, 1907,
Galerie Würthle, Vienna

Zygmunt Skwirczyński (PL), one of the caricatures about the Vienna art show, "Die Muskete", 1908, Austrian National Library

Franz Kupka: **Herbstsonne.**



Zygmunt Skwirczyński (PL), one of the caricatures about the Vienna art show, "Die Muskete", 1908, Austrian National Library



František Kupka (CZ), *Autumn sun*, 1906, National Gallery Prague

The collected objects also included **national souvenirs**. These were various items related to figures important for a given nation – pens of famous writers, insignia of rulers, or armour of military commanders. This trend resulted largely from the romantic cult of outstanding individuals.



The “Augury Shield” of King John III Sobieski from Izabela Czartoryska’s collection in Puławy, 16th century, National Museum in Cracow

For public of private use?

Some aristocrats (and later also rich industrialists) collected works of art simply to **decorate their personal residences**, creating private collections available only to a few.



Franz Alt (AT), *Interior of the Zichy Castle in Cifer*,
1878, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest

Some collectors, however, wanted to make their **collections available to a wider public**. Such activities were in line with the Enlightenment ideals related to the education and the shaping of society. Their motives were also patriotic – when the aim was, for example, to **protect and present national treasures**.



Temple of the Sibyl in Puławy – the first Polish museum established by Izabela Czartoryska, lithograph from the *Album des vues de l'Institut Alexandra*, after 1857, National Library in Warsaw

Traditions of collecting

An outstanding example is the Czartoryski collection, today a part of the National Museum in Cracow.

In 1801, Izabela Czartoryska founded the first Polish historical museum on the estate in Puławy. She collected various works of art (i.e. Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with an ermine*), but mainly souvenirs related to the history of Poland, and items belonging to famous personalities like... Shakespeare's chair.

Leonardo da Vinci, *Lady with an ermine*, circa 1473-1536,
National Museum in Cracow





Officer's cutlass with scabbard of Captain James Cook from Izabela Czartoryska's collection in Puławy, 18th century, National Museum in Cracow

Shakespeare's chair from Izabela Czartoryska's collection in Puławy, National Museum in Cracow



After the November Uprising (1830–1831), the collection was moved and secured in Paris, where her son, Adam Czartoryski, had emigrated.

At the end of the 19th century, Izabela's grandchildren continued her tradition of collecting. Władysław Czartoryski moved the collection to Cracow, where he opened the Princes Czartoryski Museum. Izabela Działyńska established her own museum in the castle in Gołuchów.



Medallion from Izabela Działyńska's collection in Gołuchów, 16th century, National Museum in Cracow



Page from *Collections du château de Gołuchów*, catalogue of Izabela Działyńska's collection, Paris 1897, National Library of France



Goluchów Castle, photo by Henryk Poddębski (PL), after 1932,
National Library in Warsaw

Portrait of Izabela Działyńska from the Czartoryski family
standing at a door to the court of the castle in Goluchów, photo
by Ignacy Krieger (PL), circa 1885, National Museum in Warsaw



Donations for museums

It also happened that the donations of **private collectors contributed to national collections**. An example is the Moravian Gallery in Brno, which soon after its founding was enriched with works donated by the priest-collector Bedřich Silva-Tarouč.

Josef Mánes (CZ), *Saint Ludmila of Bohemia*, 1866–1867, Moravian Gallery in Brno



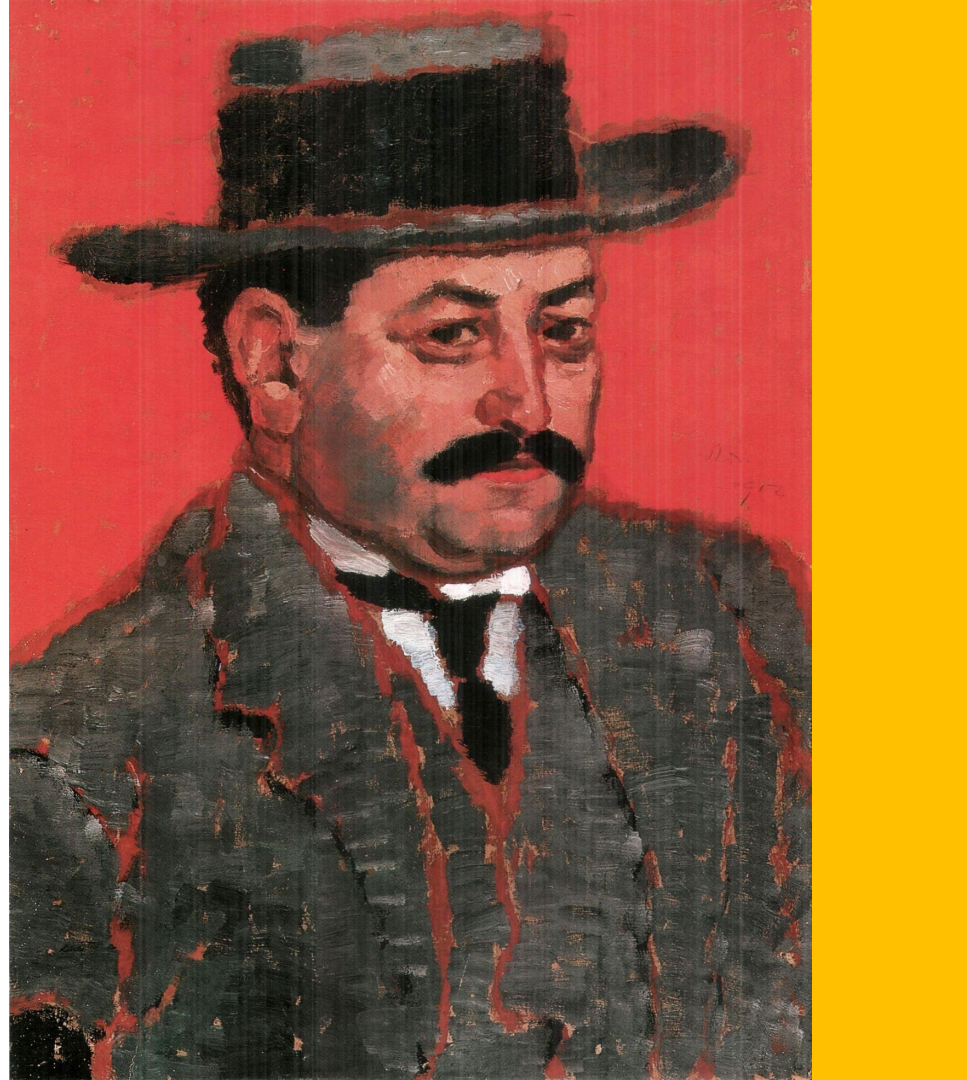
Eduard Kaiser (AT), *Bedřich Silva-Tarouč*, 1856, Moravian Gallery in Brno



Marcell Nemes was a generous donor. In 1911, he handed over several dozen paintings by contemporary Hungarian painters, such as József Rippl-Rónai or János Vaszary, to the city of Kecskemét.

He also donated valuable works to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest, and even to the most important galleries in Berlin, Munich, and Paris.

József Rippl-Rónai (HR), *Portrait of Marcell Nemes*, circa 1912, Rippl-Rónai Museum, Kaposvár, Hungary





21 SCHWABISCHER MEISTER UM 1480



19 RHEINISCHER MEISTER UM 1470



105 FRANCESCO BUONSIGNORI



241



238

Br. 411

SAMMLUNG MARCZELL VON NEMES

2. ABTEILUNG

GEMÄLDE

SKULPTUREN

TEXTILIEN

KUNSTGEWERBE UND MOBEL

VOLLSTÄCKER DES NACHLASSES
IN DER GALERIE HUGO HELBING MÜNCHEN
WACKELSTRASSE 11
VON 1931 BIS 1933
UND TULBACH 1934
HANG 12 711 MÜNCHEN 1933

HUGO HELBING MÜNCHEN 1933

Cover and details from auction catalog of Marcell Nemes's
(HU) collection, 1931, Heidelberg University Library

Gifts and donations of collectors were of particular importance to smaller towns. This is how the Gallery of Modern Art in Roudnice nad Labem was established. In 1910, the collector August Švagrovský donated over 200 works by leading Czech artists, such as Antonín Slavíček (60 paintings), Zdenka Braunerová and Antonín Chittussi to his hometown.



Miloš Jiránek (CZ), *Portrait of August Švagrovský*,
1907, Gallery of Modern Art Roudnice nad Labem



Antonín Slavíček (CZ), *Autumn in Kameničky*, 1905,
Gallery of Modern Art Roudnice nad Labem



Antonín Slavíček (CZ), *Sun in the forest*, 1898,
Gallery of Modern Art Roudnice nad Labem



Zdenka Braunerová (CZ), *Trunks*, circa 1900,
Gallery of Modern Art Roudnice nad Labem



Antonín Chittussi (CZ), *Polabian landscape*, circa 1870,
Gallery of Modern Art Roudnice nad Labem

Not just museums

Sharing private collections was just one aspect of a collector's, or **wider political and social activities**.

In the 1860s, Croatian bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer – an influential politician – decided to create several modern scientific and cultural institutions in Croatia. One of them was the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts.



Vlaho Bukovac (HR), *Portrait of Josip Juraj Strossmayer*, circa 1892, Modern Gallery, Zagreb

The institution received his collection, previously donated to the city of Zagreb by Strossmayer. These were mainly old Italian and Dutch paintings.

To this day, it is still the most important public collection of old masters' works in Croatia.





Artworks in Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters, Zagreb, authors' private archive

Public collections

At this time **national public collections** were also created.

In the case of the National Museum in Krakow, it was created from scratch. The collection was initiated in 1879 by Henryk Siemiradzki handing over his work, *Nero's Torches*.



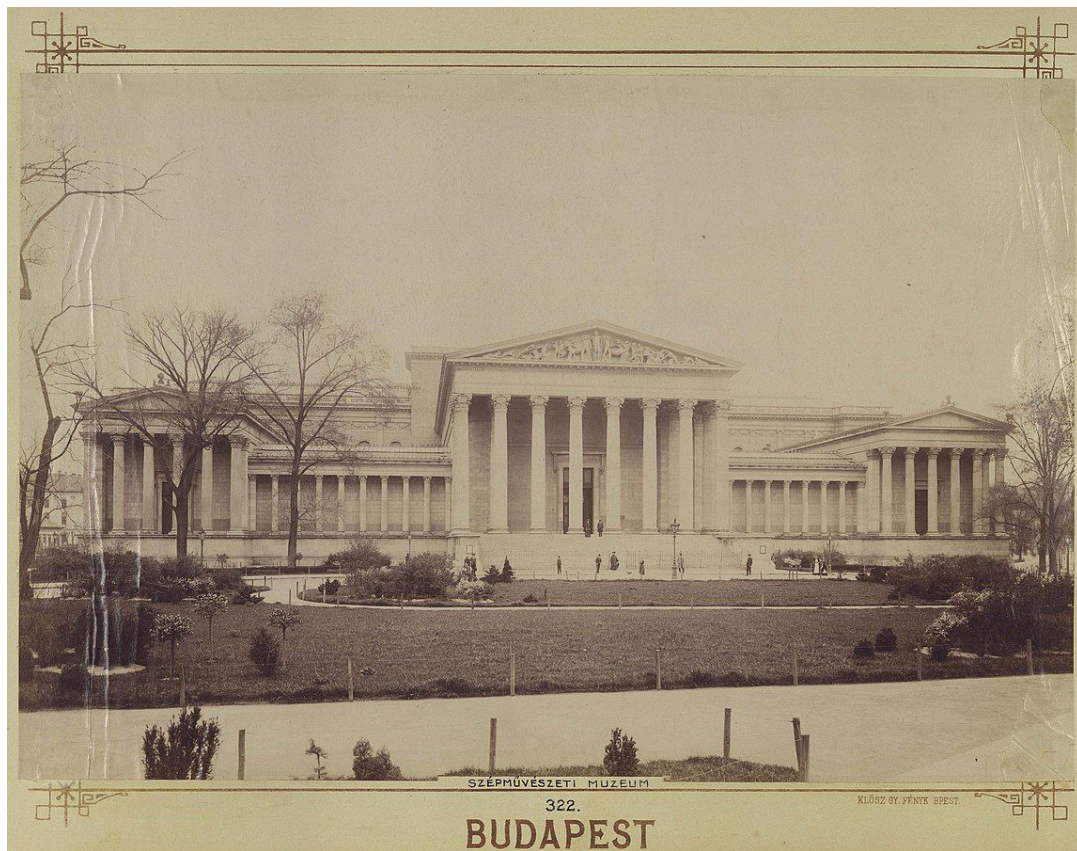
Henryk Siemiradzki (PL), *Nero's torches*, 1876,
National Museum in Cracow

Fragment of the exhibition at
the Cracow Cloth Hall, turn of
the 19th and 20th centuries,
National Museum in Cracow



The same happened with the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. The idea for establishing an institution for collecting early art emerged during the Budapest Millennial Exhibition in 1896.

Ten years later, a museum opened with collections from Hungarian aristocratic families (Jankovics, Pyrker, Esterházy, Ipolyi) made available to the public. Over time, these collections were enriched with new works – not only from the collections of other Hungarian aristocrats, but also from purchases made abroad.



Museum of Fine Arts in the Heroes' Square,
Budapest, 1906, Budapest Capital Archives

Paintings donated by
the Hungarian
art collector
Marcell Nemes



El Greco, *The Penitent Mary Magdalene*, circa 1576–1577,
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest

Ádám Mányoki (HU), *Portrait of Prince Ferenc
Rákóczi II*, 1712, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest



The location of the building – Heroes’ Square – was not accidental. The Budapest Hall of Art (home to contemporary art) was just adjacent. The Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest was meant to be a complementary place for presenting older art.



The Budapest Hall of Art, Budapest, after 1890,
Budapest Capital Archives

The collector's influence on the artist

Collectors – often well-educated people with broad horizons – could have a considerable **influence on the work of a given artist**.

The art dealer and collector Charles Sedelmeyer, representing the Paris-based Mihaly Munkácsy, advised him on what would be popular in the art market. The Hungarian painter began to create large-format paintings with biblical themes under his influence.

Mihály Munkácsy (HU), *Portrait Charles Sedelmeyer*, 1879,
Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest



CHARLES SEDELMAYER'S
PICTURE GALLERY,
6 RUE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF HIGH-CLASS PICTURES,
BY MODERN AND OLD MASTERS.

MR. SEDELMAYER is the proprie'or of the celebrated work by M.
DE MUNKACSY, "The Christ before Pilate," and Editor of all works
of MUNKACSY and BROZIK.

The Studios of these Artists can be visited by the American ama-
teurs wi h a card from Mr. Sedelmeyer.

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW TAKEN FOR THE ENGRAVING OF
"The Christ before Pilate," by Waltner.



Mihály Munkácsy (HU), *Christ before Pilate*, 1881, Déri Museum, Debrecen

Feliks Jasiński, nicknamed “Manggha”, had a strong influence on the development of Japanism in Polish painting. He was a lover and connoisseur of Japanese art.

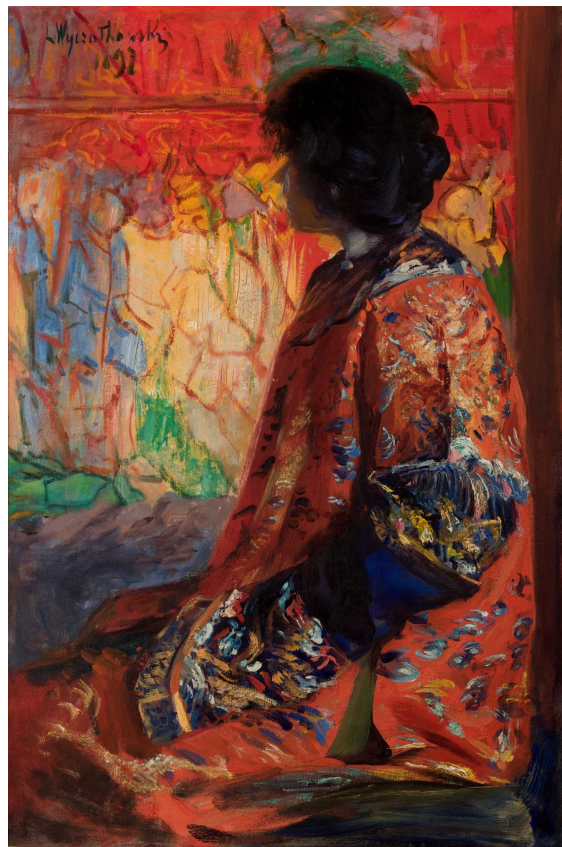
His collection inspired many artists which borrowed from Jasiński “oriental” props (kimono, fans).



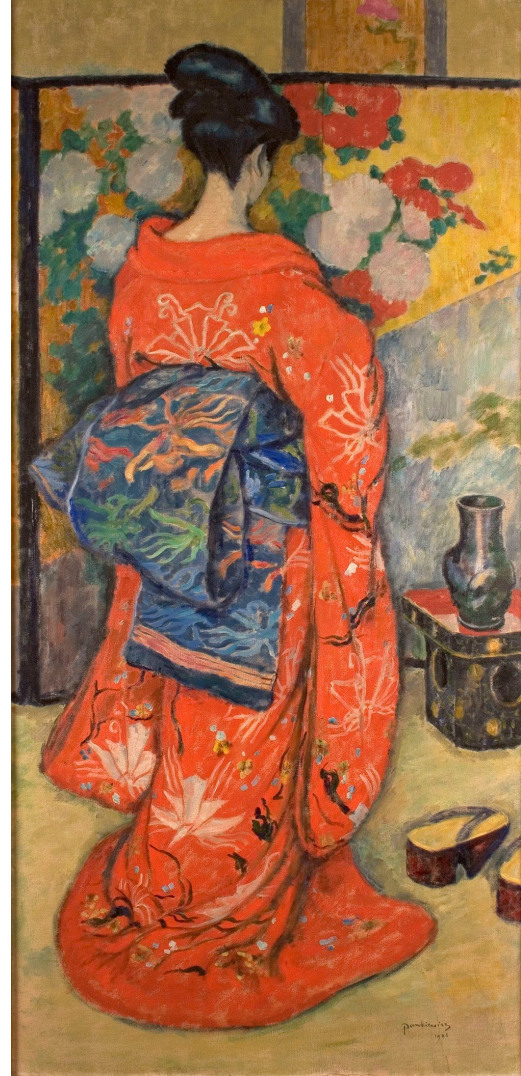
Leon Wyczółkowski (PL), *Portrait of Feliks Jasiński in blue coat*, 1911, National Museum in Cracow



Interior of Feliks Jasiński's apartment in Cracow, photo by Tadeusz Jabłoński (PL), between 1896 and 1906, National Museum in Cracow



Leon Wyczółkowski (PL), *Japanese woman*, 1897, National Museum in Cracow



Józef Pankiewicz (PL), *Japanese woman*, 1908, National Museum in Cracow

Ignacy Korwin-Milewski, on the other hand, bought self-portraits of the most outstanding Polish painters in the 1890s. Among them were Jan Matejko, Aleksander Gierymski, Jacek Malczewski and Anna Bilińska (who's painting was interrupted by the artist's death).



Leon Wyczółkowski (PL), *Portrait of Ignacy Korwin-Milewski*, 1901, National Museum in Cracow



Jan Mateko (PL), *Self-portrait*, 1892,
National Museum in Warsaw



Ludwik de Laveaux (PL), *Self-portrait with
palette*, 1892, National Museum in Warsaw



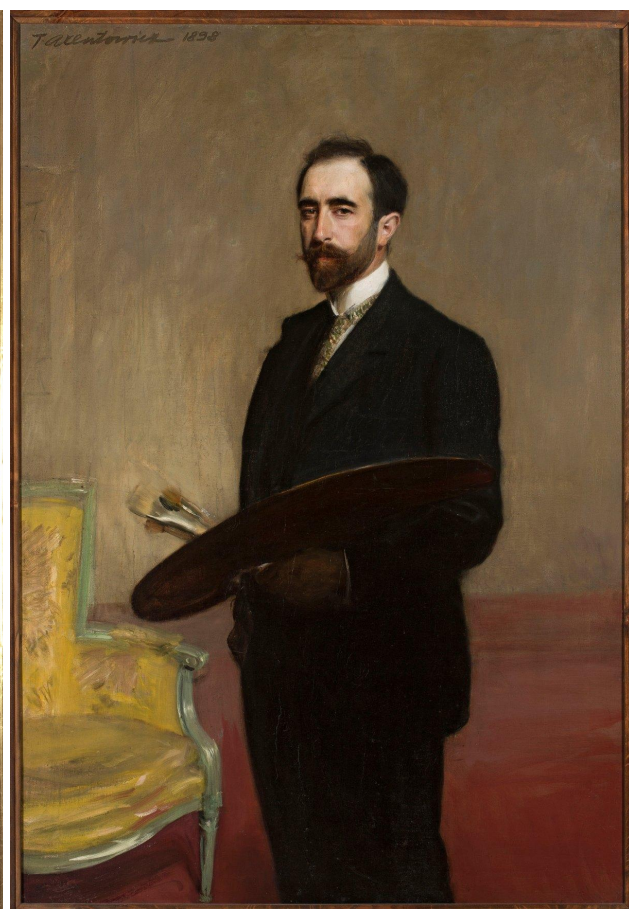
Anna Bilińska (PL), *Self-portrait (unfinished)*,
1892, National Museum in Warsaw



Jacek Malczewski (PL), *Self-portrait with palette*, 1892, National Museum in Warsaw



Antoni Piotrowski (PL), *Self-portrait with palette*, 1893, National Museum in Warsaw



Teodor Axentowicz (PL), *Self-portrait with palette*, 1898, National Museum in Warsaw

Many collectors also commissioned their favourite artists for portraits of themselves or of family members.

Jacek Malczewski (PL),
*Portrait of Edward
Aleksander Raczyński*,
1903, National
Museum in Poznań



Róża and Edward Aleksander Raczyński during the arrangement of the painting gallery in the Palace in Rogalin, circa 1911, Raczyński Foundation





Józef Pankiewicz (PL), *Portrait of Adam Maksymilian Oderfeld*, 1902, National Museum in Warsaw

“hidden” self-portrait of the artist

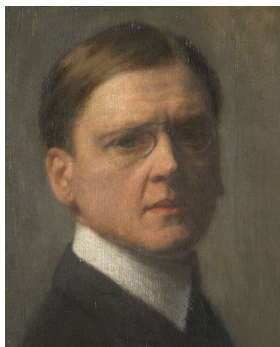
Family of Adam Maksymilian Oderfeld (PL), art collector from Warsaw, portrayed by Józef Pankiewicz (PL)



Józef Pankiewicz (PL), *Portrait of Janina Oderfeld and her daughter*, 1899, National Museum in Warsaw



Józef Pankiewicz (PL), *Little girl in red dress (Portrait of Józefa Oderfeld)*, 1897, National Museum in Kielce



Józef Pankiewicz (PL), *Self-portrait (detail)*, 1904, National Museum in Poznań

Patron-collectors

The **financial support** offered by collectors was of **great importance for the careers** of artists, especially young ones. The patron-collectors were especially valued in Vienna, were around 1900 they brought together many outstanding artists of different generations.

Gustav Klimt (AT), *Sonja Knips*, 1897/1898,
Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

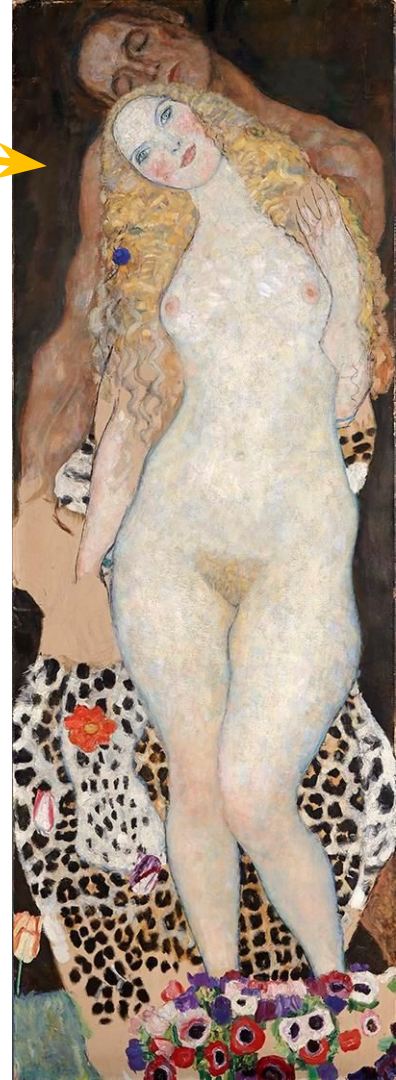


Interior of Villa Knips, circa
1926–1931, Christian
Brandstatter Archive, Vienna



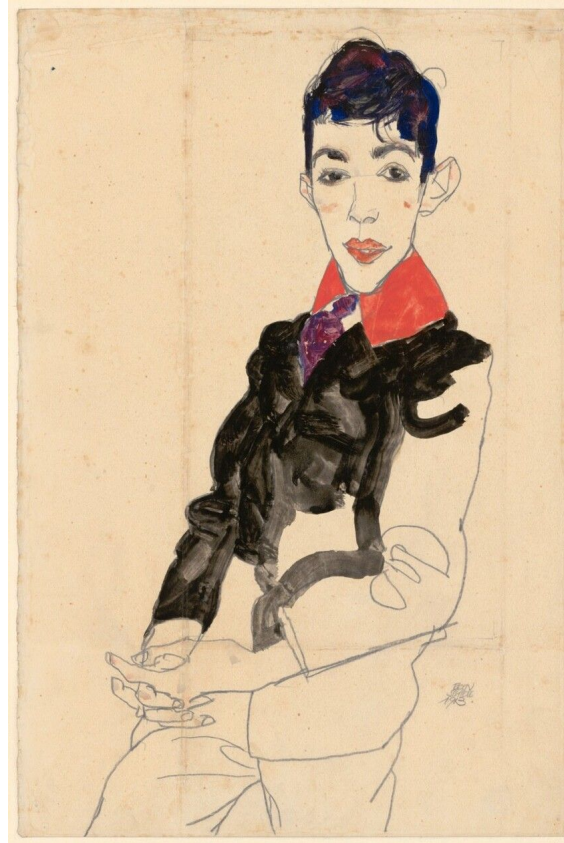
Painting purchased from Sonja
Knips by Österreichische
Galerie Belvedere in 1950

Gustav Klimt (AT), *Adam and Eve*, 1916/1917,
Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

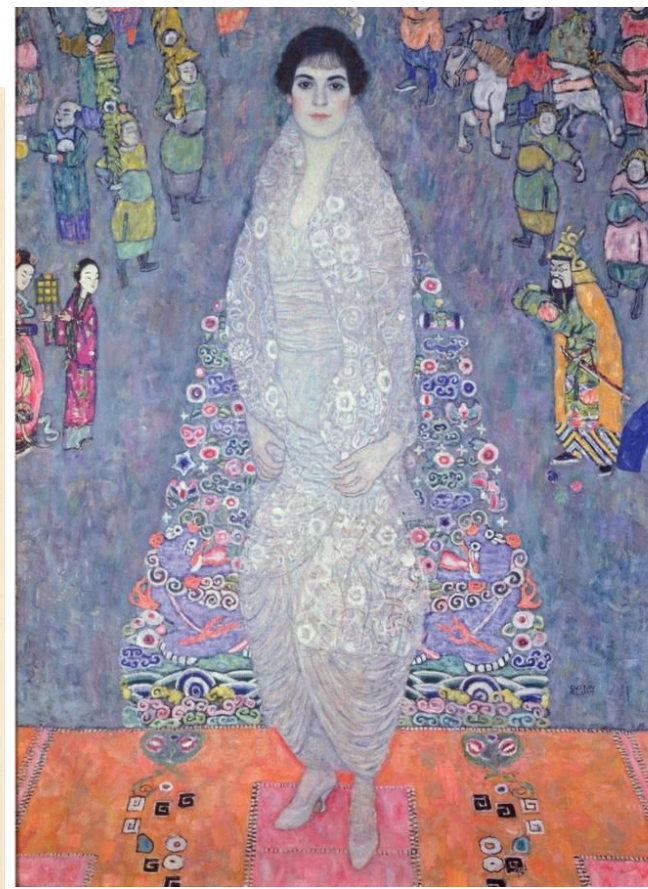


Rich industrialists, who often befriends painters, enjoyed a wide artistic patronage. Carl Reininghaus, and August and Serena Lederer were among the most important collectors of Klimt's works in Vienna. Part of their collection was the famous Beethoven Frieze, taken off the walls of the Secession Building.

Portraits of the son and
the daughter of August and Serena
Lederer



Egon Schiele (AT), *Erich Lederer*, 1913,
Albertina, Vienna



Gustav Klimt (AT), *Portrait of Baroness
Elisabeth Bachofen-Echt*, circa 1914, Neue
Galerie New York

Many representatives of the Viennese elite and the upper middle class not only collected works of art. They also ordered portraits or bought individual works, treating them as decorations for their own homes. This had a great impact on the Viennese art market.



Egon Schiele (AT), *Portrait of Carl Reininghaus*,
1910, private collection

Karol Lanckoroński, a Polish aristocrat who made a career at the court in Vienna, was the patron of Jacek Malczewski for many years. He not only bought his works, but also took the artist on trips to Italy or Asia Minor. Lanckoroński even arranged a summer studio for Malczewski on his estate.



Jacek Malczewski (PL), *Portrait of Malgorzata and Karol Lanckoroński*, 1905, Lviv National Art Gallery



Jacek Malczewski (PL), *Sketches from journey to Turkey, 1884*, Wawel Royal Castle – State Art Collection, Cracow

Gallerist-collectors

Some collectors linked their private passion with the **art trade**.

In 1906, the Hungarian Joseph Brummer founded a gallery in Paris together with his brothers, Imre and Ernest. Interestingly, he focused on ancient and non-European art. He offered artefacts from Africa and South America, as well as works from the Middle Ages and pre-Columbian times.

Henri Rousseau (FR), *Portrait of Joseph Brummer*, 1909, private collection





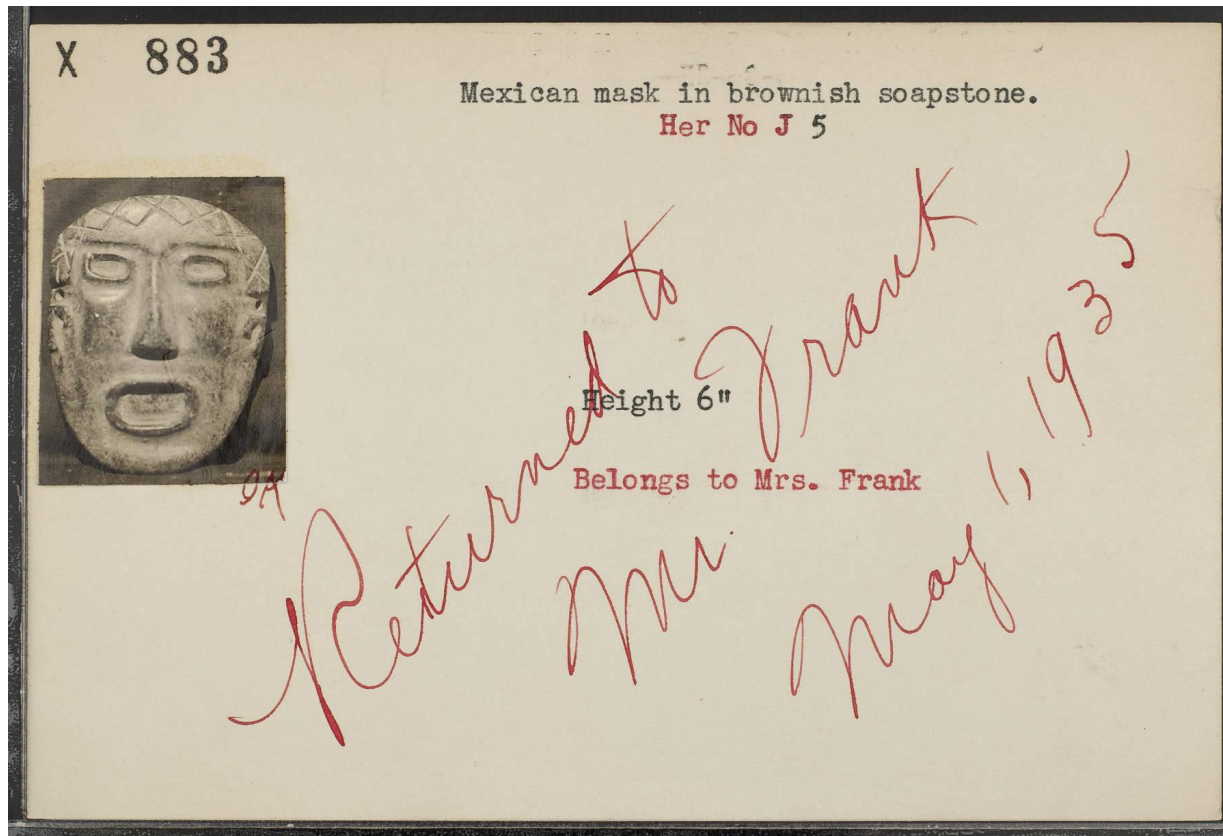
Joseph Brummer and Imre Brummer, 1917 [or 1918], The Brummer Gallery Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Brummer Gallery, 3 Boulevard Raspail, Paris, circa 1910–1911,

The Brummer Gallery Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

After the outbreak of World War I, Brummer moved to New York, where he established another gallery. Even museums bought valuable exhibits from him.



Object inventory card, Mexican mask in brownish soapstone, circa 1935, The Brummer Gallery Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Art historian-collectors

Among art collectors, we could also find many **professional art historians**.

An outstanding connoisseur of the Italian Renaissance was Wilhelm (William) Suida, who lectured on art history in Florence, Vienna, and Graz. In 1939, he emigrated to the United States. His painting collection is part of the Blanton Museum of Art collection at the University of Texas in Austin.

One of the paintings from
Suida's collection

Guercino, *Personification of Astrology*, circa 1650–1655,
Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin



In turn, Lanckoroński's daughter, Karolina, defended her doctorate in art history in Vienna in 1926. Nine years later in Lviv, she obtained her habilitation as the first woman in this field in Poland.

In 1990s she donated over 500 items (including works by Rembrandt) to the collections of the Royal Castle in Warsaw and to the Wawel Castle, from the collection she inherited from her father.

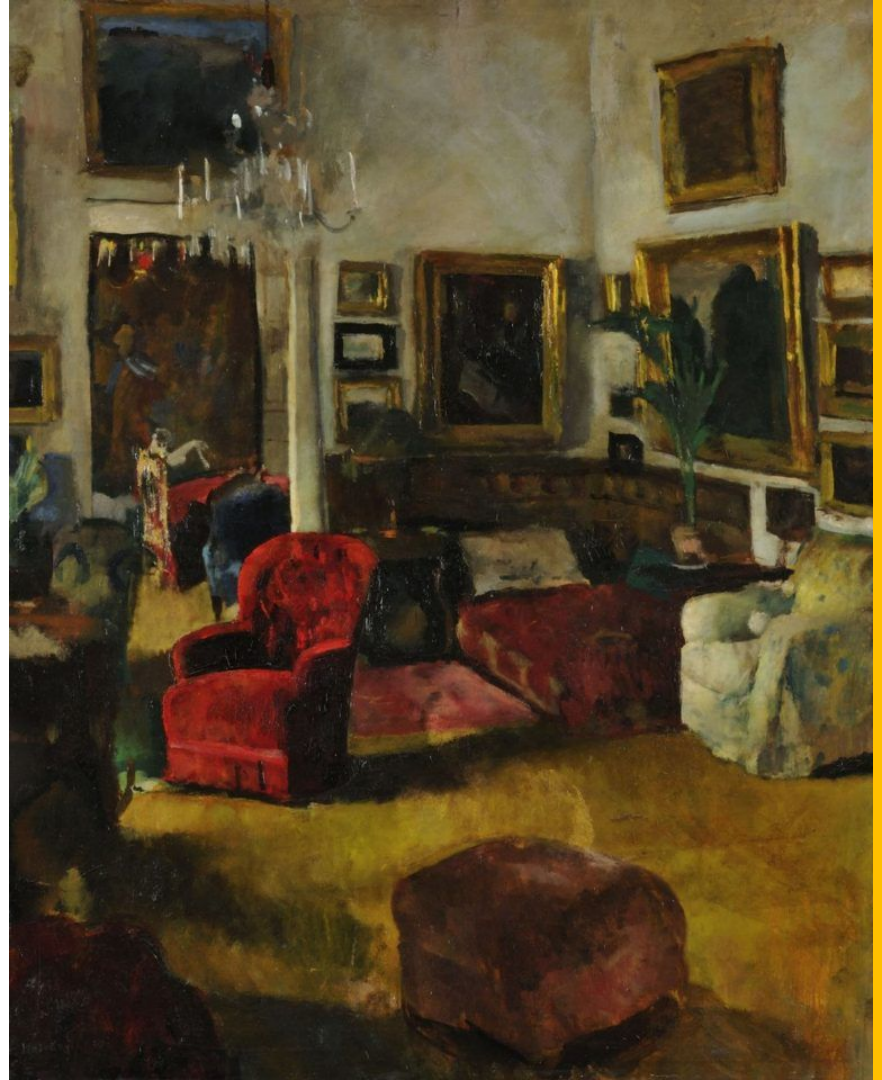


Karolina Lanckorońska with her father Karol Lanckoroński
in Vienna, 1918, Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences

Artist-collectors

It was not uncommon for **artists who had large estates** to become art collectors themselves.

The painter Ferenc Hatvany came from a family of wealthy industrialists, therefore, apart from his artistic activity (he exhibited works in Paris and Berlin), he collected several hundred works of art over his life. Among them were paintings by the most eminent European painters; from Tintoretto to Cézanne.



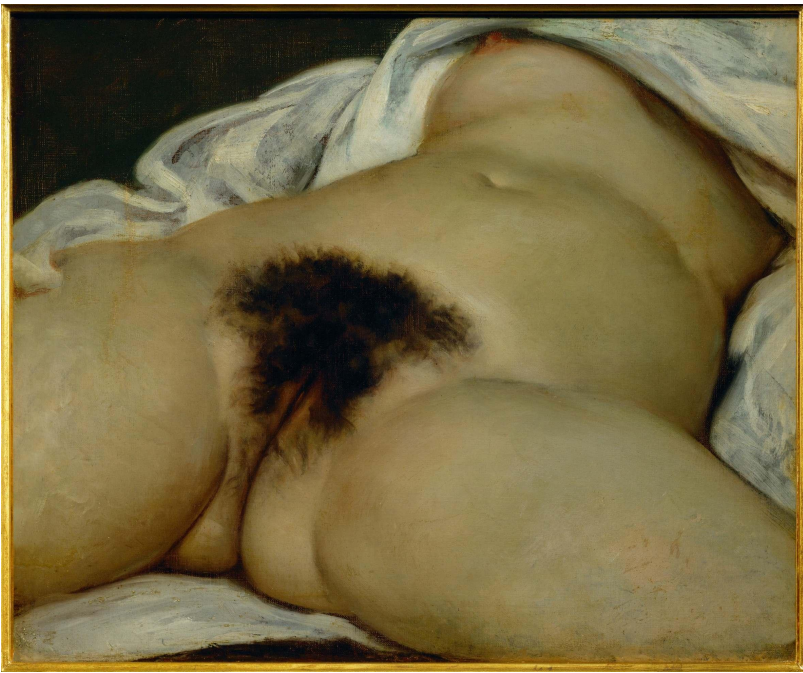
Ferenc Hatvany (HU), *Interior*, mid-1910s,
Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest



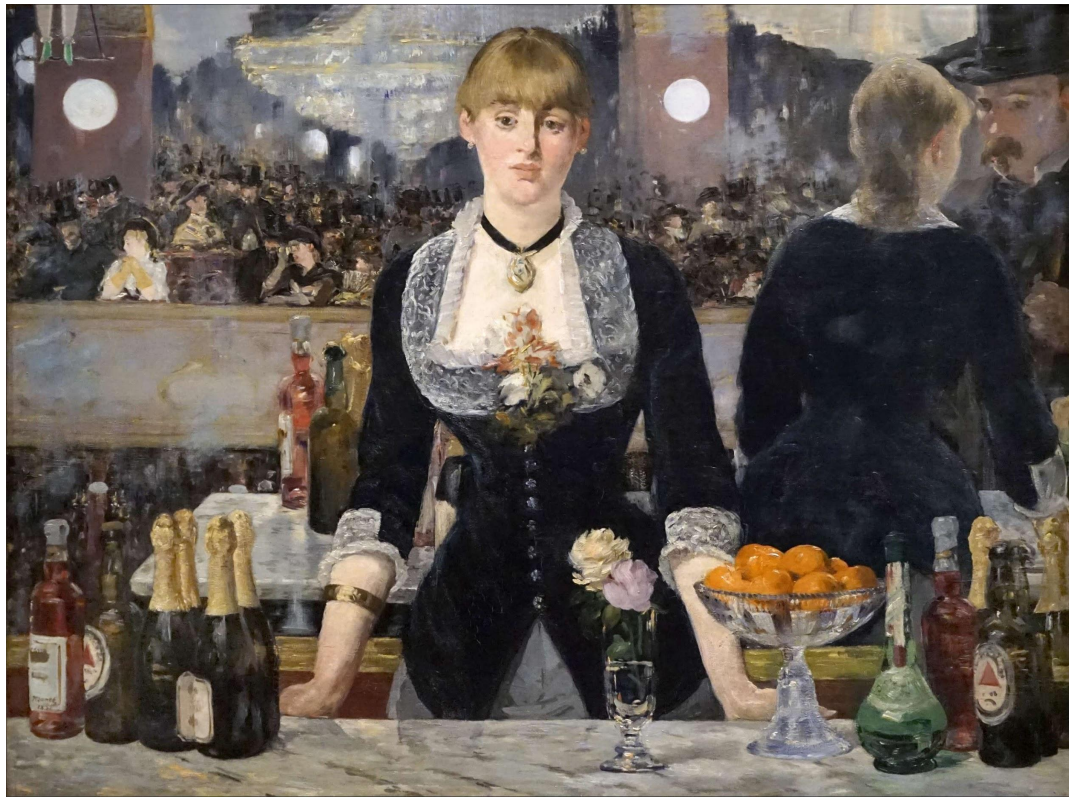
Ferenc Hatvany (HU) with one of his works



Ferenc Hatvany (HU), *Still life*, date unknown, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest



Gustave Courbet (FR), *Origin of the world*, 1866,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Édouard Manet (FR), *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882,
Courtauld Gallery, London

Paintings which were for a while in
Ferenc Hatvany's collection

The aforementioned Joseph Brummer not only ran a gallery in Paris, but also studied sculpture under the direction of Auguste Rodin.



Sculpture by Joseph Brummer (HU), early 20th century, The Brummer Gallery Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Joseph Brummer (HU) and open-air painting class in Szeged, Hungary, early 20th century, The Brummer Gallery Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The painter Alina Bondy-Glass collected art together with her husband, a lawyer in Warsaw. In the artist's will, after her death, many works were transferred to the National Museum in Warsaw.

Alina Bondy-Glass (PL), *Self-portrait*, circa 1890-1900, National Museum in Warsaw



Jan Rembowski (PL), *Portrait of Alina Bondy-Glass*, early 20th century, National Museum in Warsaw



War losses

The situation of Central European collectors was radically changed by the rise of Nazi's to power, World War II, and the occupation of Central Europe by the Soviet Union and the related change of political system.

Pictures from **Jewish collections** were **confiscated** and **unlawfully seized** by the Nazis. Often the owners, whose lives were in danger, were forced to sell the objects from their collections.

Gustav Klimt (AT), *Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, circa 1907,
Neue Galerie New York



This is how the collections of Ferenc Hatvany or the Viennese collection of the Rothschild family were dissipated.

One of the best-known examples is the *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I* by Gustav Klimt commandeered by the Nazis, but recovered in 2006 by the model's relative after a spectacular trial.



Poster of the *Woman in Gold*, film based on the the case of *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*

During the war, many works were **damaged, stolen, or lost**. Polish collections suffered the greatest losses during the Warsaw Uprising, and after its end, when the Germans decided to raze the city to the ground.

Damaged paintings from the National Museum in Warsaw in the “Hall of damage” – fragment of the exhibition “Warszawa oskarża” [Warsaw Accuses], May 1945 – January 1946, photo by Zofia Chomętowska (PL), National Museum in Warsaw



Moreover, during the retreat of German troops from Central Europe in 1944–1945, many works were stolen or lost. For example, *Portrait of a Young Man* by Raphael from the collection of Izabela Czartoryska remains lost to this day. Other works, in turn, were taken by the Soviet army and found their way to Russian museums.

In countries that became communist after World War II, some private collections were **nationalized** and put into public collections.



Polish art historian Karol Estreicher presenting Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with an Ermine* at the train station in Cracow, upon the painting's return to Poland, April 1946

About the Authors

Jakub Zarzycki, PhD

An art historian and literary scholar.

He received his joint PhD from the University of Wrocław, Poland and Sapienza University of Rome.

Assistant Professor at the Institute of Art History University of Wrocław.

Vice-President & Research Officer for the Wirth Alumni Network.

From September 2015 to August 2016, PhD Research Fellow at the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies.



Karolina Dzimira-Zarzycka

Art historian and Polish philologist.

Author of popular culture texts on art and women's history. In collaboration with online magazines: Historia:poszukaj (National Institute for Museums and Public Collections) and Culture.pl (Adam Mickiewicz Institute).

Recipient of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage scholarship (2020).

Research Associate at Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies (2015/2016).