



## THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

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**Press Preview: Thursday, August 2 at 2:00 pm**

### **Exhibition Highlights Splendor of Turn-of-the-Century Vienna *Textiles of Klimt's Vienna* on view August 3, 2007 – January 6, 2008**

**Washington, DC (July 2, 2007)** — Join The Textile Museum in celebrating the splendor of turn-of-the-century Vienna, Austria in *Textiles of Klimt's Vienna*, on view August 3, 2007 through January 6, 2008. Experience the vibrant art and social scene of Vienna at the dawn of the 20th century, led by painter Gustav Klimt and other artists, through the display of original material and photographs.

Focusing on the era's Secession movement and Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop), this exhibition examines the artistic values and aesthetic development of the period through textiles. The Textile Museum creates an intimate, focused exhibition that highlights the period's dramatic transformation of European art as artists began to rebel against traditionally accepted styles and media and to create new forms of art for a new era.

"As the foremost institution dedicated to textiles in the Western Hemisphere, we are pleased to present this exhibition highlighting the creative activity of the Secession movement and the Wiener Werkstätte," said Daniel Walker, director of The Textile Museum and curator of *Textiles of Klimt's Vienna*.

#### **Goals of the Secession and Wiener Werkstätte Movements**

Vienna was a center of creative activity between 1897 and 1932 with the emergence the Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte. The Secession movement challenged the prevailing conservative tendencies of the Vienna Art Academy's exhibitions and encouraged a heightened sensitivity to and appreciation for culture and arts in everyday life. The line between fine and applied arts became blurred, and the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork) was



Textile fragment, *Bavaria*, Carl Otto Czeschka for Wiener Werkstätte, 1910-11. Textile Traces: The Lloyd Cotsen Collection. Photograph by Susan Einstein.

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introduced. The Wiener Werkstätte was established to design and produce a full range of objects and furnishings for specific interiors in order to create a unified, harmonious ensemble. The Workshop provided an outlet for the work of many artists in a wide variety of media – including architecture, graphic arts, painting, furniture, metalwork, jewelry, leatherwork, fashion and textiles. Textiles are one of the most resonant and revealing aspects of artistic creativity of this era and a key element in the realization of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

### **Founding of the Secession and Wiener Werkstätte**

Looking to the future and challenging the past, the Secession was founded in 1897 by a group of young artists that included the architect Josef Hoffmann, the painter Koloman Moser and the painter Gustav Klimt, who was elected its first president. An engraving at the entrance to the Secession building in Vienna conveyed the philosophy of the group: "To every age its art and to art its freedom." The year 1903 brought the establishment of the Wiener Werkstätte by Hoffmann and Moser along with their financial backer, Fritz Wärndorfer. In an effort to recapture the aesthetic values of the pre-industrial era, the artists of the Wiener Werkstätte aspired to create well-designed, handcrafted objects and to consolidate design, production and distribution within one organization. Wiener Werkstätte participants designed Secession exhibitions, commissioned paintings from Secession artists for their interior design projects, and created the environments and clothing in which Klimt and artistic Viennese society moved.

### **About the Exhibition**

*Textiles of Klimt's Vienna* includes 58 textiles and related objects, including fabric samples, a sample book, fabric covered books, and boxes created by artists Josef Hoffmann, Dagobert Peche, Maria Likarz-Strauss and others. The definitive text on the subject, Angela Völker's [Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte 1910-1932](#), serves as an accompaniment to the exhibition and will be available for purchase in the shop.

The objects on view are drawn primarily from the collection of Lloyd E. Cotsen, renowned businessman, collector and philanthropist as well as a former member of The Textile Museum's Board of Trustees. Cotsen is the recipient of the Museum's 2007 George Hewitt Myers Award. Named for The Textile Museum's founder and presented by the Museum's Board of Trustees, the award for lifetime achievement recognizes his exceptional contributions to the study and understanding of the textile arts. Cotsen's longstanding support of The Textile Museum includes founding of The Lloyd Cotsen Textile Documentation Project and the endowed Lloyd Cotsen Curatorial Scholarship Fund.

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### Works on Display

Curated by Daniel Walker, Director of The Textile Museum, the exhibition will be presented in four sections. Three of the four sections highlight the work of individual artists of the Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte.

One section of the exhibition focuses on architect **Josef Hoffmann** (1870-1956), a founding member of both the Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte. As director of the Werkstätte, Hoffmann designed textiles, furniture, and other objects. Hoffman's best-preserved *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the Palais Stoclet in Brussels, Belgium, encompasses his architecture, furnishings and textiles along with mosaics by Klimt. "Showing great range in style over his long and productive career, Hoffmann's best-known and most highly regarded textile designs are straightforward and seemingly simple geometric patterns in two colors," said Walker.

Another section showcases the work of **Dagobert Peche** (1893-1923), a prolific artist in many media who designed more than 113 fabric patterns for the Wiener Werkstätte. His patterns are recognized for their distinctive style that typically features the delicate representation of naturalistic forms, sometimes in large-scale repeats. *Textiles of Klimt's Vienna* will highlight the graphic effects and fine-line drawing that distinguish Peche's designs.

The third section contains pieces by **Maria Likarz-Strauss** (1893-1956). According to Walker, "she was the most active textile designer in the workshop [Wiener Werkstätte], with almost 200 designs attributed to her." Likarz-Strauss had a broad stylistic range that incorporated the stylized floral elements associated with Peche with the formal geometric patterns that originated with Hoffman. Yet, she is most well known for her abstract patterns with infinite repeats, which reflect the international trends that led to the Art Deco Style in the years after Klimt's untimely death in 1918.

Completing the four sections of the exhibition is a **survey of the full range of textile designs** that were born from the Secession aesthetic movement and the Wiener Werkstätte. Using works from various artists, including Koloman Moser, Carl Otto Czeschka, Eduard Wimmer-Wisgrill – the first head of the *Wiener Werkstätte's* fashion department – Mathilde Flögl and Felice Rix-Ueno, among others, this section will emphasize the variety of textiles and their stylistic evolution over time.

The Textile Museum will concurrently present two other exhibitions this fall focusing on collecting and collectors. *Ahead of His Time: The Collecting Vision of George Hewitt Myers* examines the collecting philosophy of The Textile Museum's founder, while *Private Pleasures: Collecting*

*Contemporary Textile Art* showcases contemporary textiles drawn from private collections in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region; both exhibitions open September 28, 2007. *Textiles of Klimt's Vienna*, made possible by the generous loan from Lloyd E. Cotsen's personal collection, continues the theme of collecting present throughout all the fall exhibitions. In conjunction with the exhibitions, the Museum will present The TM Fall Symposium from October 19 through 21 on the topic *The Collecting Passion*.

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### **About the Curator**

Director of The Textile Museum since 2005, Daniel Walker brings his expertise and enthusiasm to the Museum. "His knowledge of textiles, his reputation as a leading scholar in the field of textile studies, and his significant museum experience are instrumental in helping The Textile Museum carry out its mission, to further awareness and appreciation of textiles as art, with a wider audience," said Bruce P. Baganz, President of the Museum's Board of Trustees.

Curating *Textiles of Klimt's Vienna* allows Mr. Walker to fulfill his desire for the Museum to continue to "to develop exhibitions, publications, and educational programs that both highlight the Museum's holdings [and loans] and place them in a larger context."

Prior to becoming Director at The Textile Museum, Walker was the head of the Islamic Department at The Metropolitan Museum of Art for 17 years. From 1975 through 1988, he served as the Associate Curator then Curator of Ancient, Near Eastern, and Far Eastern Art at the Cincinnati Museum of Art. He holds degrees from Bowdoin College (A.B.) and Harvard University (A.M.).

### **About The Textile Museum**

Founded in 1925 by George Hewitt Myers, The Textile Museum is an international center for the exhibition, study, collection and preservation of the textile arts. The Museum explores the role that textiles play in the daily and ceremonial life of individuals the world over. Special attention is given to textiles of the Near East, Asia, Africa and the indigenous cultures of the Americas. The Museum also presents exhibitions of historical and contemporary quilts, and fiber art. With a collection of more than 18,000 textiles and rugs and an unparalleled library, The Textile Museum is a unique and valuable resource for people locally, nationally and internationally.

The Textile Museum is located at 2320 'S' Street, NW in Washington, DC. The Museum is open Monday - Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Admission is free; suggested donation is \$5.00. For further information, call 202-667-0441.

**For more information or images**, please contact Cyndi Bohlin at 202-496-5061, or by e-mail at [cbohlin@textilemuseum.org](mailto:cbohlin@textilemuseum.org) or visit [www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm](http://www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm).