
Val a dir que després de la guerra Schiele era un autor menyspreat. Molts lo consideraven pornografia a causa dels seus nombrosos dibuixos erotics; d’altres deien que era “nova manera”, expressió amb un desagradable toni al terme d’art degenerat encunyat pels nazis. Quan Leopold va comprar Nus fra un aixecat també se li considerava com un podre – una fitxa de la història de l’art europeu – la multidapt present a la subasta esclatà en eufòrics i ràsols. Però Leopold i uns pocs més no van canviar d’opinió, i el temps els donà la raó: cap altre artista ha experimentat una revaloració tan fulminant en els últims anys com Egon Schiele. El 2011, el seu paisatge Cases amb bugada de colors, de la col·lecció Leopold, es va subastar per un preu de 24,8 milions d’euros.

It is worth mentioning that after the war, Schiele was an underestimated artist. Due to his many erotic drawings, many considered his work pornographic. Others accused him of working “outside his genre”, an expression that disagreeably connoted “degenerate art”, a term the Nazis had coined. When Leopold bought The Small City (Dead City) in 1953, he purchased the work for collecting in 1950 when, aged twenty-five, he purchased a gouache version of Egon Schiele’s The Small City (Dead City). Shortly afterwards, he purchased his first oil painting, Sunset, directly from Arthur Rorschizer, an art critic and moreover, Schiele’s patron. In 1983, Leopold added the work The Hermits to his collection. He bought this important, large masterpiece — believed to represent Schiele with Gustav Klimt — from Arthur Stummer, a Viennese emigrant living in London. To do so, Leopold sacrificed a gift which his mother had promised him as an incentive for rapid completion of his studies in Medicine: a VW beetle. Leopold preferred to use that money – 30,000 shillings – to buy this piece of art.

El nucli de la col·lecció és l’art austríac de la primera meitat del segle XX, on la raó: cap altre artista ha experimentat una revaloració tan fulminant en els últims anys com Egon Schiele. El 2011, el seu paisatge Cases amb bugada de colors, de la col·lecció Leopold, es va subastar per un preu de 24,8 milions d’euros.
Entre les obres més conegudes de Schiele dins la col·lecció, s’hi troben Home nu asssegut, Autotreff amb alquequengis, Retrat de Wally Neuzil – “parella” de l’anterior–, Cardenal i monja i Els ermitans. De Gustav Klimt destaquen Mort i vida, El gran palauenc i A la riba de l’Attersee: al Leopold Museum es pot veure pas a pas la seva transició des del Modernisme a l’Expressionisme. En les àmplies sales llenyes d’llum, a més de quadres i dissenys, es visiten hi troba valoses obres d’art Noucentistes i mobles de la Viena dels volts de 1900, una selecció de diversos objectes procedents dels Wiener Werkstätte (Tallers Vienesos) i objectes dels prestigiosos arquitectes Otto Wagner i Adolf Loos. A la col·lecció també hi destaquen escultures africans i d’Oceania. Molts artistes d’aquesta època s’inspiraven en objectes semblants. En els onze anys d’existència, el Leopold Museum ha ofert, a més de les exposicions permanentes, nombroses exposicions temporals de gran importància.

El gran pollancr I
Cardenal i monja
Els ermitans.

Gustav Klimt’s most striking works are among Schiele’s best-known works in the collection are Portrait of Wally Neuzil (a counterpart to the latter), Cardenal and Nov and The Hermits. Gustav Klimt’s most striking works are Death and Life, The Great Poplar I and The Arbor. The Leopold Museum illustrates his transition, step by step, from Art Nouveau to Expressionism.

In these spacious, light-filled halls, apart from paintings and drawings, visitors will find valuable handcrafted works and furnishings from 1900s Vienna, various objects chosen from the Wiener Werkstätte workshops and objects from the prestigious architects Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos. The collection also boasts sculptures from Africa and Oceania. Many artists in that period found inspiration in comparable objects. In eleven years of existence, in addition to the permanent exhibitions, the Leopold Museum has offered numerous temporary exhibitions of singular importance.

The private foundation of the Leopold Museum was formed in 1994, when Rudolf Leopold, after five decades as a collector, made a donation of over five thousand works with a total value estimated at 575 million euros. In 2001, the museum was opened in MuseumsQuartier, Vienna’s central new museum complex. The building, perfectly integrated into the main square by architects Ortner&Ortner, has façades of white Muschelkalk – limestone from Vrzaska on the Bulgarian Danube – which contrasts beautifully with the anthracite basalt of the Museum of Modern Art, facing it.

Dr Rudolf Leopold ran the museum until his death in 2010. Leopold’s merits are many: not only did he create a unique collection but he established the foundation, resulting in the opening of his private collection to the general public. The Leopold Museum is the largest centre in the MuseumsQuartier cultural complex and receives the most visitors. The collection’s nucleus – Austrian art from the first half of the twentieth century - highlights Art Nouveau and Expressionism. Holding the largest and most significant collection of the expressionist Egon Schiele’s work, with 42 oils and 188 drawings, the museum also boasts eight paintings and one hundred drawings by Gustav Klimt.

Among Schiele’s best-known works in the collection are Seated Male Nude, Self-Portrait with Chinese Lantern, Portrait of Wally Neuzil (counterpart to the latter), Cardenal and Nov and The Hermits. Gustav Klimt’s most striking works are Death and Life, The Great Poplar I and The Arbor.

Until the day the collection was transferred to the museum, Rudolf and Elisabeth Leopold lived surrounded by their paintings and objects which they used daily. What began as a tiny spark with that first painting that Rudolf Leopold purchased while still a medical student, ignited an ongoing passion for art which continues to burn at the Leopold Museum, even now, after his death.

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