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**MAY 23 TO
AUGUST 31, 2014**

**POINT OF VIEW #9
Gustav Klimt "Lady with a Lilac Scarf"**

This portrait was bequeathed to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in 2013. We can trace its provenance back to the collection of Georg Lasus (1851-1933) and it remained in his family until 2013. Lasus, a Jewish businessman in Vienna, owned a number of early works by Klimt, among them, for example, "Farmhouse with Birches" and "Lady with Hat and Feather Boa", two paintings the family were forced to sell to the Galerie St. Lukas in 1939; they ended up in the Belvedere but were restituted in 2001. We do not know, however, where or when Georg Lasus acquired the "Lady with a Lilac Scarf".

It seems the painting was never exhibited in public and was, until now, known only to art historians. The first to identify it as an early work by Gustav Klimt was Johannes Dobai in his dissertation of 1958. In 1967 it was included in the catalogue raisonné assembled by Dobai and Fritz Novotny, although the attached image was but black-and-white and

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omitted the 11,4 cm high gold-leaf border along the lower edge that functions as a base for the portrait in its oval frame. The two most recent catalogues raisonnés were published by Alfred Weidinger (2007) and Tobias Natter (2012) and both reprint this photograph; they date the portrait to around 1880 and around 1888, respectively. However, a recent cleaning suggests that the painting was actually finished even later, probably around or shortly after 1895: the almost “impressionistic” handling of the skin comprising pink, blue and orange hues is similar to works executed during the second half of the 1890s. This date is also supported by the shape of the signature, and the introduction of the gold border that functions both as a flat ornament and –system; we find a similar element in two other works Klimt painted in 1895, “Love” and “The Court Actor Josef Lewinsky as Carlos”. After having seen the cleaned painting both Weidinger and Natter now support the later date. The infrared image documents a (in part) carefully detailed preparatory drawing, and we may assume that the painting was executed on a pre-primed canvas.

We still do not know the identity of the sitter. The format – a rectangle inscribed with an oval – has led a number of art historians to suggest that Klimt based his composition on a photograph; this is also supported by the sitter’s dreamy expression and the suggested new date of execution: this retrospective aspect, the composition and, last but not least, the sitter’s somewhat homely attire all suggest that Klimt’s painting is informed by a portrait photograph taken a few years earlier. Perhaps the sitter had died, or she may have been in mourning – both, however, are merely suggestions. However, we can probably assume that Klimt was commissioned to execute this portrait, and that it may have served as a personal memento of the sitter. In this context the gold border along the lower edge of the painting may have been intended for an inscription.

In 2012 the Picture Gallery started “Points of View”, a series of exhibitions showcasing an exceptional, unusual or little-known painting that, for lack of hanging space, is rarely displayed in the permanent collection, or that has been the object of recent research, which allows us to see it in a new light.

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PRESS PHOTOGRAPH



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Gustav Klimt
Lady with a Lilac Scarf
c. 1895
© KHM

OPENING HOURS AND ENTRANCE FEES

Kunsthistorisches Museum	Adults	€ 14,-
Maria Theresien-Platz	Concessions	€ 11,-
1010 Vienna	Vienna Card	€ 13,-
	Groups (of 10 or over)	€ 10,-
Tue – Sun, 10am – 6pm	Jugendliche unter 19	frei
Thurs 10am – 9pm	Jahreskarte	€ 34,-
June, July, August open daily!		

PUBLICATION

A brochure in German and in English will be published in conjunction with the show.

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