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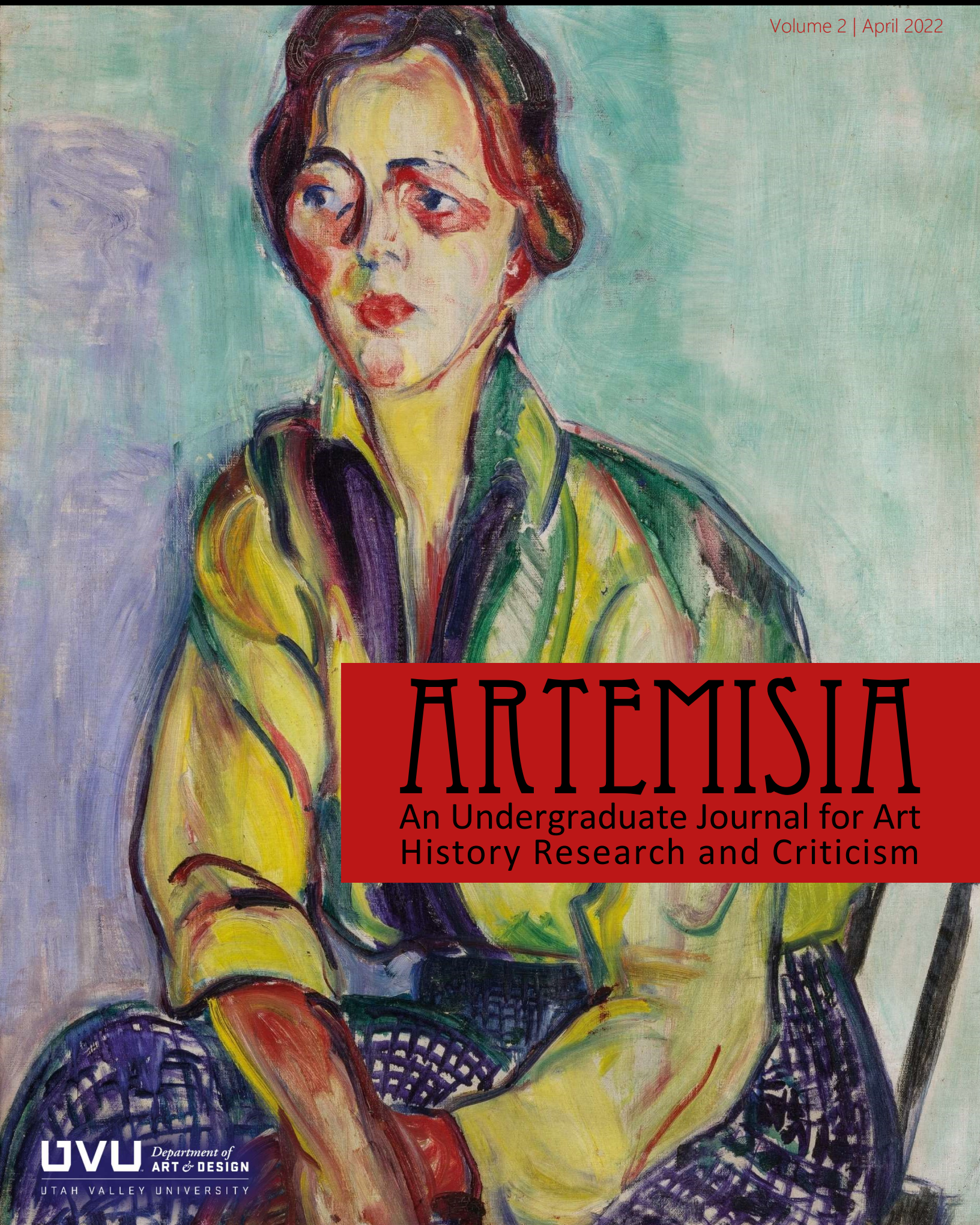

ARTEMISIA

An Undergraduate Journal for Art History Research and Criticism

UVU Department of ART & DESIGN
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Content for Research Papers: If you wish to submit a research paper for a future edition, consider what is original to that paper. Research papers, done in the compressed time of an academic semester, tend to be critical summaries of what others have said on a topic—and that's perfectly fine. For *Artemisia*, however, papers should go a step or two beyond. Students submitting a research paper should ask themselves what they see as being *original* or in some way a *contribution* to what is known about the topic. "Original" and "contribution" do not necessarily imply brand new research; that type of originality is what would be expected for a thesis or dissertation at the graduate–school level. For this journal, originality should be thought of as perhaps applying a fresh methodological approach to a familiar topic, asking a new question, arguing a point, and so forth. Originality in research means what you are doing is from your own perspective although you are drawing arguments from other scholars' research to support your arguments.

Format: Papers should be 10–12 double–spaced pages in length, and should include footnotes and works cited page in correct Chicago Manual of Style format.

***Content for Art Encounters*:** Topics for art encounters should be based on your personal engagement with the visual arts. We would welcome a formal analysis of a favorite painting, an anecdote about an experience you had during an internship or study abroad, a personal essay about how your life has been affected by art, a review of an art exhibition you attended, your response to current practices in museum work or art education, a review of a book or film on an art historical topic, an essay describing your observations about connections between art and other professions or fields of study, etc. There is no limit to the possible subjects for you to consider. We want to hear your voice, your opinions, and your experiences.

Format: Entries should be 1–4 double–spaced pages in length. If possible, include an image related to your experience.

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A WORD ABOUT THE SECOND EDITION

Dr. Charlotte Poulton, Dr. Steven Bule, Dr. Travis Clark

The publication of this edition of *Artemisia* follows closely on the heels of our successful Biennial Art History Symposium. Our theme was "Presentation is Everything: How Display, Consumption and Transmission Impact Our Perception of Art," and the participants delighted attendees with papers on topics ranging from reliquaries to street art to Vaporwave. The support we received for this event from students, faculty, and members of the community was outstanding and reaffirmed the fact that scholarship and engaged learning are thriving in UVU's Department of Art and Design.

When we published the inaugural edition of *Artemisia* in 2021, we hoped that this venue would have two main consequences: 1) inspire students to refine their research and writing skills for upper division courses and produce works worthy of publication, and 2) encourage students to engage more deliberately with the arts and share their experiences with their peers. Our hopes were realized with the variety and quality of submissions we received for this second edition. The articles in this second edition treat subjects that might be less familiar to our readers. Lisa's exploration of Ruckers instruments in Dutch Baroque paintings is rooted in the *paragone*, which debates the competitive and complementary merits of the arts. In this case, the relationship between music and painting. Instead of focusing on works from Klimt's famous Golden Phase, Cecilia's paper examines the influences of modern science, philosophy, and feminism on the lesser known but highly controversial ceiling paintings for the University of Vienna. The encounters with art demonstrate a desire to recognize marginalized artists (Lexia's encounter with Anita Malfatti), sensitize us to the treasures to be found in local art exhibitions (Lindsay's encounter with the *L'Affichomania* exhibition), and encourage us to seek out emotionally moving experiences with art (Katy's encounter with Picasso's *Guernica.*)

We hope readers will find the contents of this edition both challenging and informative and, perhaps, be nudged to contribute to ongoing conversations about art in a future edition of *Artemisia.*

MODERNIST STRUGGLE IN GUSTAV KLIMT'S PAINTINGS

Cecilia Olsen

In 1900, Professor Friedrich Jodl of the University of Vienna led a protest with eighty–six other academics against Gustav Klimt's commissioned painting, *Philosophy,* executed between 1900–1907 (Fig. 1). He summarized the objections to the painting by writing "We are fighting neither against the nude nor artistic freedom, but against ugly art."[1] A sea of criticism rose with a number of sharp complaints voiced about *Philosophy.* Some critics argued against its erotic nature, some disapproved of Klimt's artistic abstraction, and some dissented over its lack of academic narrative. Others simply thought the work was ugly. Even though most of the university's professors took offense at this painting's overall style and message, the artist was allowed to finish the commission along with the paintings *Medicine* and *Jurisprudence,* 1900–1907 (Figs. 2 and 3)*,* both of which were met with the same hostile reception as *Philosophy.*[2] The German phrase *maler blöd*, meaning "stupid as a painter," was used to describe Klimt, who lacked an extensive education due to his working-class origins.[3] In contrast to the critics' perception of Klimt as stupid, the artist's works show a deep comprehension of modernist thinking. While the three paintings were viewed by some as ugly, Klimt proved himself to be deeply aware of new ideas, albeit ideas that hadn't been widely accepted in an ultra-traditional society. *Philosophy, Medicine, Jurisprudence,* and the scandal they caused represented this larger struggle between tradition and modernization within Vienna's society. Through analysis of the biographical narrative and the socio-historical context of these commissioned paintings, Klimt's art emerges as a challenge to long-standing tradition by reflecting contemporary modernization related to philosophy, science, and first-wave feminism.

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[1] Eva Di Stefano, *Gustav Klimt: Art Nouveau* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 2008)*,* 42.

[2] Unfortunately, Klimt's three paintings, known as the "Faculty Paintings," are only known by black and white photographs. Some art historians believe the works were deliberately destroyed in May 1945 when Nazi troops burned the building in which they were housed.

[3] Frank Whitford, *Klimt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 58.

The struggle between tradition and modernization in Vienna was built up throughout the nineteenth century as technology and science developed quickly in the city. The streets of Vienna changed at the end of the century with the arrival of electric lamps, automobiles, trams, and the placement of lines for telegraphs and telephones.[4] While these modern additions were taking place, Austrian Emperor Franz-Josef I resisted the quick progress in technology. He refused to allow telephone lines to run to his palace and continued to use a horse drawn carriage. The palace's rooms were lit by oil lamps, and all imperial letters were handwritten, not telegraphed.[5] Given the Emperor's deep-rooted attachment to tradition, it was surprising when an imperial order was issued to tear down the medieval walls surrounding Vienna's inner city, thus allowing for further modernization of the city. Beginning in the 1860s and lasting until the 1890s, a monumental reconstruction program took place. New public buildings, museums, and apartment buildings were constructed, best seen in the creation of the grand boulevard known as the Ringstrasse, offering many new commissions for artists like Gustav Klimt.

PHILOSOPHY

It is in this period of change that Gustav Klimt made a name for himself as an architectural decorator and illusionistic history painter. His work for the new Burgtheater on the Ringstrasse was a huge success for the artist and won Klimt the Emperor's Prize in 1890.[6] When Klimt was commissioned in 1894 by the Ministry of Culture and Education, alongside his colleague, Franz Matsch, to work on the University of Vienna's graduation hall ceiling, nobody could have foretold the change in style and message that lay ahead.[7] Originally, the commission's program was outlined in the contract as a central painting of the triumph of light over darkness surrounded by four personifications of the university's departments:

[4] Ibid, 31.
[5] Ibid, 30.
[6] Carl E. Schorske, "Mahler and Klimt: Social Experience and Artistic Evolution," *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 30. As part of the *Kaiser-Preis,* or Emperor's Prize, Gustav Klimt was awarded 400 guilders.
[7] Tina Marlowe-Storkovich, "'Medicine' by Gustav Klimt," *Artibus et Historiae* 24, no. 47 (2003): 231.

theology, philosophy, medicine, and jurisprudence. Matsch was responsible for the central painting and *Theology*, while the other three subjects were given to Klimt.

The design, inspired by the Enlightenment's rationality, was meant to be monumental and illusionistic. The style and treatment of the subject matter were intended to be like Klimt's previous work in the Burgtheater's ceiling panels, something like his *Romeo and Juliet,* c. 1888 (Fig. 4), which was traditionally rendered.[8] Overall, Klimt was given the task to commemorate the greatness and prestige of the university. With these expectations for a positive theme rendered in an academic style, the approach taken in *Philosophy* shocked its viewers. Twelve years after he had worked on the Burgtheater, Klimt's art had completely broken away from his past of history painting. Though Matsch's *Theology* and *The Triumph of Light over Darkness* both reflected the traditional style that was preferred by the university, Klimt moved towards more abstraction and modernity with each painting he created for this commission. Before he had finished *Philosophy*, Klimt showed it to the public in 1900. The immediate response was one of confusion. The painting's abstract style and vague theme overwhelmed viewers. The main compositional anchor featured a column of naked, writhing figures on the left, and the rest of the canvas was devoted to an infinite cosmos. Amid the stars in the center, Klimt painted the face of a sphinx with half-opened eyes as if she were waking up in the galaxy. At the very bottom of the canvas, half of a woman's face peeks out from behind her own hair, making eye-contact with the viewer. The painting's separate figures gave an impression of pain, disconnect, and mystery. People also complained that though the painting is captivating while observed in a gallery, all the details would be indistinguishable if it were to hang on the ceiling.[9] In addition to their displeasure with the style of the painting, critics complained that *Philosophy* didn't correctly convey the assignment's theme. Instead of praising the philosophy department of the university, the painting resisted interpretation.[10] The classical rationality that was missing in style was also missing in meaning.

[8] Whitford, 52.
[9] Ibid, 59.
[10] Ibid, 57.

Certainly, Klimt's painting did not communicate its underlying themes as clearly as Raphael's *School of Athens*, 1510 (Fig. 5). While the Renaissance master highlighted great philosophers from classical antiquity in a clear narrative approach, Klimt's work lacked such clarity. Klimt's symbolism was vague; however, it did carry a philosophic message, albeit one that was quite opposite what many at the university expected. The ambiguous nature was meant to highlight the futility in studying philosophy. Freely flowing forms in a chaotic mess represented life and randomized suffering. Life was ultimately reduced to the repetition of birth, suffering, and death, with no end in sight. The sphinx of stars, a common figure associated with riddles and violence in classical studies, represents the mystery of truth. The face at the bottom personifies knowledge, but she appears amused as the viewer tries to figure out the message of the painting. All these elements together, in an unconventional compilation, suggest that the mysteries of life are ultimately unattainable and that it is pointless to try to understand man's destiny through the study of philosophy. Professors, like Jodl, were insulted by the artist's treatment of the subject. The philosophy popular at the University of Vienna at the time was positivism.[11] In positivism, truth could be ascertained through experience, inspired by the optimistic potential of scientific improvements in the nineteenth century. Through logic, experiment, and reason, positivist philosophers believed that all knowledge and truth could be discovered. In contrast to the university's position on truth, Klimt portrayed truth as completely evasive.

Despite being described as *maler blöd*, Klimt's philosophical message corresponded with modern philosophy. For instance, there was a clear connection to the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, the philosopher of pessimism.[12] Schopenhauer taught that human nature is subject to hopelessness and suffering. Reflecting Schopenhauer's claim that the universe is irrational, the figures in *Philosophy* are set on an aimless course and are contorted in pain. The pessimistic approach to philosophy in Klimt's painting is also influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's writings. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883), Nietzsche talks about the desire one feels to affirm life in its mysteries. Nietzsche synthesizes desire, lust, and

[11] Schorske, 43.
[12] Whitford, 58.

pain together: "Do you say 'yes' to a single desire? Oh, my friends, then you say 'yes' to all pain."[13] Pain and pessimism were at the forefront of *Philosophy* and were an affront to the university's philosophy department.

Additionally, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, published in *The Origin of Species* in 1859, seems to play a part in the intellectual meaning of Klimt's *Philosophy.* The sphinx, a mixture of woman and animal, has been identified by scholars as an allusion to mankind's animalistic origins.[14] Although Darwin's theory was published decades before Klimt's paintings for the university, it radically altered traditional beliefs in God and was not well received in Vienna. The disorder and chaos in this procession of human bodies together with the animalistic sphinx would have been extremely emblematic – and revolutionary – to viewers in Vienna as a symbol of Darwinism.[15] There is a sense of evolution in the column of people and the lack of order, which implies random progression and the lack of a divine organizer. The people in *Philosophy* were left godless and comfortless, a concept that troubled the conservative Catholic population.

The extent of rejection and controversy this painting stirred up led to a petition in 1900 to the Minister of Education, Dr. Ritter von Hartel, to terminate Klimt's involvement in the university commission.[16] The ordeal was highly publicized and started a national conversation about whether artists really should have artistic freedom when their commission is paid for by the public. Though Klimt had been granted a free hand after presenting the initial designs, his artistic vision was now called into question. Dr. Hartel mercifully declined to cancel the commission for Klimt's *Philosophy* and allowed the artist to continue working on *Medicine* and *Jurisprudence*.[17] This conversation concerning the artist's freedom was a sign to the rest of Europe that an Avant Garde painter had finally emerged in Vienna. Although Austrian academics criticized *Philosophy*, the painting went on to win a gold medal in the Paris Exposition in that same year.[18] As arbiters of European

[13] Quoted in Schorske, 43.
[14] Ibid, 34.
[15] Emily Braun, "Ornament as Evolution," in *Gustav Klimt: The Ronald S. Lauder and Serge Sabarsky Collections,* ed. Renée Price (New York: Neue Galerie), 152.
[16] Whitford, 60.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Di Stefano, 42.

taste in Paris reaffirmed the worth in Klimt's art, the artist received just enough encouragement to remain uncompromising in the next two university paintings.

MEDICINE

Presented to the public in 1901, *Medicine* carried a message that no matter the efforts of physicians, death and suffering would win out in the end. The composition of this piece mirrored the organization of *Philosophy*. A column of writhing figures is located on the right, with a naked, young woman on the left, and a Greek figure Hygieia standing in the foreground. Criticisms were made about the naked figures, pointing to what critics saw as a meaningless orgy.[19] Critics condemned the young woman on the left as a pornographic figure, especially as she thrusts her hips forward.[20] While Hygieia, the Greek goddess of health, was typically portrayed as a classical figure, Klimt chose to represent her in an abstract style that was controversial and upsetting. Symbols of mistletoe, the bowl of Lethe, and a serpent all conventionally identify the figure as Hygieia.[21] Although these three symbols are meant to represent holy regeneration, Klimt represents her beyond these three conventional symbols, and creates a severe and formidable figure in flat, abstract clothing. Instead of a healing deity, she looks more like a priestess willing to sacrifice her patient.

Similar to *Philosophy, Medicine* also appears to mock the university departments. The same column of figures, this time on the right side of the composition, retains the same significance of the never-ending cycle of birth, suffering, and death. However, this time Klimt paints a personification of death in the middle of the column. This dark figure receives even more meaning as it is contrasted with the blue uterus motif hovering just beneath the "pornographic" young woman. By juxtaposing death with birth through these two figures, Klimt may be suggesting that birth is also a death sentence. Instead of hailing the medical department for their abilities to heal, death and pain take precedence in this painting.

[19] Ibid.
[20] Whitford, 60.
[21] Marlowe-Storkovich, 231.

Further enraging Klimt's detractors, the inclusion of the blue uterus enveloping a late-stage embryo had implications regarding modern science and feminism. As one who socialized in upper class circles, Klimt would have been aware of the scientific discoveries and some of the controversies they ignited. One such discovery was that of embryonic science, which was first described in 1895. At the time, the fact that embryos grew in utero was revolutionary as it would negate God as the creator.[22] Instead, *Medicine*'s uterus motif celebrated the woman as the creator.[23] In addition, the imagery of the young mother's hand reaching out towards the column of people and a man's arm reaching back towards her creates an allusion to Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (Fig. 6).[24] Instead of the godly imagery that Michelangelo painted, Klimt's reaching arms are even more separated while searching for each other, indicating the necessity of both men and women in creation. Klimt distorts the life-giving power of God into the random occurrence of conception. Michelangelo's creation scene is secularized in *Medicine*, where God is removed and replaced with women.

The celebration of women is apparent in this scene. Hygieia takes the prominent role of health, instead of Asclepius, the first doctor and her husband. Women take the place of God as creators through childbirth; in so doing, the space is carved out for female sovereignty.[25] Gustav Klimt once said that he wasn't interested in himself as a subject matter. Instead, he preferred to immortalize women, who were given the ultimate priority and "primary agency" in his paintings.[26] One theme of his entire oeuvre was his belief that women were sexually superior, and he sought to portray the "metamorphic, elusive, eternal feminine."[27] Women in *Medicine* take on the primary role in the composition of child bearing and rearing. In addition to the woman on the left who hovers over the

[22] Mitchell Ash, "Multiple Modernisms in Concert: The Sciences, Technology and Culture in Vienna Around 1900," in *Being Modern: The Cultural Impact of Science in the Early Twentieth Century,* ed. Robert Bud, Paul Greenhaulgh, Frank James and Morag Shiach (London: UCL Press, 2018), 25.
[23] Braun, 153.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Di Stefano, 44.
[26] Braun, 163.
[27] Di Stefano, 16.

late-stage embryo, Klimt also painted a pregnant woman in the top right corner and a woman holding a young child just behind Hygieia. Clearly, motherhood was revered more than medicine in this composition.

First wave feminism in Vienna began with the creation of many organizations with the purpose of advancing women's place in society during the second half of the nineteenth century, such as the influential General Austrian Women's Association (1893). Progressive women – and men – lobbied for gender equality in civil rights and an increased presence of women in the public sphere. Antifeminists at the time claimed that "women's righters" rejected their femininity and, as Freud posited, "failed to overcome penis envy."[28] Conservatives feared that feminism would destroy families and all of society if women rejected femininity and gender roles. The women's movement responded to these comments by upholding the "eternal feminine," and operating under the motto "equal but different."[29] In other words, these women asserted that their role was different than the male role, and still emphasized the importance of femininity and motherhood. While efforts were being made to improve girls' educations, create safe working conditions for lower class women, abolish prostitution, and further women's suffrage, women's righters (mostly comprised of upper middle class women) didn't want to reject their primary role as mothers and wives. This "equal but different," concept is reflected in Klimt's art as he focuses on the female figure within the context of motherhood in *Medicine.*

It is important to note that at a time when female journalists were unheard of, Klimt appointed Berta Zuckerkandl as the chief spokesperson for his art.[30] Zuckerkandl and other feminist writers in Vienna defended Klimt's nude figures. These early feminists applauded modern art and literature that explored female sexuality.[31] Zuckerkandl, though she was a loud voice in favor of Klimt's art, had one negative thing to say about him during her career, and that was regarding *Medicine.* She found fault that Klimt didn't pay much attention to cures and healing,

[28] Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in fin-de-siècle Vienna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 4-5.
[29] Ibid, 15.
[30] Braun, 146.
[31] Ibid, 149.

which were essential in medicine.[32] She may have been biased because her husband worked at the university in the medicine department. At this time, the University of Vienna led the world in scientific investigations and discoveries. Medicine, natural sciences, surgery, and radium research all were undergoing significant improvements in Vienna.[33] Of the three subjects for this commission, medicine was the one that was a point of national pride. Klimt had every reason to portray physicians in a positive light; however, he chose, instead, to focus on the inevitability of death.

There is plenty of evidence to support that Klimt was aware of the medical progress of the university. Emil Zuckerkandl, Berta's husband, gave Klimt access to the dissecting room of the university to study cadavers.[34] Because of the Zuckerkandls' friendship with the artist, there is a record that Klimt attended Emil's lectures on embryonic cells.[35] Klimt was undoubtedly aware of the scientific landscape around him. Additionally, he was also well acquainted with grief. By this time in his life, many in his family had died, and the most recent deaths of his father and closest brother, Ernst, sent the artist into a depression.[36] For all his experiences watching family members fail in health, Klimt's pessimism regarding physicians and medicine were authentic and deep. Although Vienna led the world in medicine, Klimt was all too aware that even modern medicine was often powerless against death.

Regardless of philosophical, scientific, or feminist themes found in *Medicine,* criticisms of Klimt's supposed stupidity and lewdness continued. Ironically, the negative reviews brought a larger audience for his painting, as the accusations of pornography attracted 38,000 people to see *Medicine* on exhibit.[37] Those who protested Klimt's art claimed that this painting had gone beyond bad aesthetics and had now reached the grounds of immorality. Because of the controversy over the commission, the issue was brought to the Austro-Hungarian Parliament to be

[32] Ibid, 153.
[33] Ash, 23.
[34] Braun, 148.
[35] Ash, 25.
[36] Whitford, 24, 45.
[37] Di Stefano, 42.

discussed. In the end, however, no official decision was made. The Ministry of Culture and Education was hesitant to support Klimt; however, Dr. Hartel continued to defend the original commission. Klimt kept the commission, but a separate opportunity for him to become a painting teacher at the Kunstlerhaus School of Art was retracted. The artist had been elected for this prestigious position twice and was rejected by the school board both times. Because of the controversies over this public commission, he was never considered again.[38]

JURISPRUDENCE

In response to his recent experiences with his art on trial, Klimt produced *Jurisprudence,* his final work on the commission, which was completed in 1903. Instead of toning down what his critics found controversial, the artist deliberately made sure that this painting clashed with the rest of the commission. This canvas was darker, flatter, more abstract, more detailed, and didn't fit the color scheme of the other paintings. In the receding background, personifications of Justice, Truth, and Law act as passive observers of a torturous scene in front of them. In the foreground, an old man suffers torment from three Greek furies. *Jurisprudence* shifts sympathy away from justice and towards the victim. This subject matter is made incredibly personal for Klimt, whose art had just recently been under the scrutiny of a court. Much like the helpless man being castrated by a hellish octopus, Klimt had felt impotent in the face of the law and felt that justice was only a mask for punishment.[39] Just as Klimt had done with *Philosophy* and *Medicine*, this third painting communicates the artist's frustration with life, this time in relation to his critics.

Emily Braun has noted the theme of evolution in this scene, which would correspond with other Darwinian themes in this commission. Braun argued that the shift from loose amorphous ornament to structured geometric ornament represents society's moral evolution from brutality to rationality.[40] This reading of evolution is dependent on the extended use of flattened pattern. In comparison to

[38] Whitford, 60.
[39] Schorske, 44.
[40] Braun, 155–56.

Philosophy and *Medicine*, where Klimt's ornamental patterning is limited to small areas such as Hygieia's dress, *Jurisprudence* uses patterns throughout the whole composition. In the foreground, the octopus and three furies are ornamented with organic patterns, while in the background there are more geometric patterns surrounding Truth, Justice, and Law. Part of the theory of evolution included Darwin's idea that primitive morality evolved into modern civilization over time through natural selection. As the viewer's eye moves from the violent foreground to the calm scene in the background, this supposedly parallels our rise to civilization shaped by evolution. However, this concept of evolution expressed through ornamental pattern is much less convincing than the simple explanation that this painting was an elaboration of the ordeal Klimt experienced when his art underwent scrutiny by the Parliament.

For a third time, critics brought the issue of Klimt's art to Dr. Hartel, requesting that the commission be cancelled. Artistic Advisory Committee of the Ministry became involved this time, and though they decided to accept the works, they also chose not to display them on the ceiling.[41] Rather, they planned to exhibit them vertically in the new State Gallery of Modern Art. Klimt, in anger, said that he would not relinquish ownership, but the Ministry replied that the paintings already belonged to the state. To this, Klimt's response was that the paintings were "unfinished" and, therefore, were his.[42] A common story told, perhaps an apocryphal tale, recounts that when ministry men went to collect the paintings from Klimt's studio, the artist dramatically held them at gunpoint until they agreed the paintings were his. Regardless, the Ministry eventually agreed to surrender their rights to the paintings, and, in 1905, Klimt repaid his advance payments.[43]

An earlier event revealed that the same public that met the university commission with aversion were capable of accepting modern art, or at least remaining neutral. In May 1897, young, unconventional artists seceded from the Vienna Academy of the Arts, the Kunstlerhaus, and established their own institution, named the Vienna Secession. One of the goals of the group, which had

[41] Whitford, 62.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Di Stefano, 42.

elected Klimt president, was to exhibit art that had been rejected by the academy.[44] The national academy upheld the importance of illusionistic history paintings and disapproved of modern art movements. Because they wanted to discourage new art trends, the Kunstlerhaus prohibited exhibitions of foreign artists, an idea that the Secessionists found to be narrow-minded. In the Secessionists' first exhibition, works by foreign artists, including Whistler, Rodin, and Sargent, were shown to the Vienna public for the first time. This exhibition was open to the public for three months and attracted 57,000 visitors.[45] While the Secession angered the academy's elites, the exhibit didn't face the same critical public backlash that *Philosophy, Medicine,* and *Jurisprudence* received in 1900–03. Inversely, Secessionist exhibitions proved that most of the public could be accepting of modern art, even though it challenged conventional tastes promoted by the Kunstlerhaus.

The public's response to the Secessionist exhibit teaches an important lesson as to why Klimt was so criticized. The Vienna Secession demonstrated that there was space in their society for modern art, but conservative views in Austria created a complex tension and anger over Klimt's commission. While critics pointed to ugly abstraction and pornographic figures, the professors who aimed to terminate Klimt's commission were ultimately angered over the presentation of the subject matter. The departments of philosophy, medicine, and jurisprudence were reduced to inconsequential, irreligious, and irrational endeavors by Klimt. It was neither a question of "ugly art," that Professor Jodl protested, nor stupid art, that was suggested by those calling Klimt *maler blöd*; rather, it was a question of progressive art that challenged Vienna's conservative beliefs.

In totality, *Philosophy*, *Medicine*, and *Jurisprudence* challenged artistic tradition the same way that modernization in science and literature challenged traditional worldviews. Themes of evolution, embryology, pessimism, and feminism in these paintings align Gustav Klimt with Darwin, Freud, Nietzche, Zuckerkandle, and others. One might say that the modernization of art that Klimt led was a visual reiteration of other humanities and scientific fields that had already started modernizing in Vienna. Klimt's rebellion was not just about politics, religion,

[44] Whitford, 69.
[45] Ibid, 70.

or simple aesthetics, it encouraged artistic freedom in a modernizing world. The fact that some found his work to be ugly only supports Klimt's vision that art should reflect cultural surroundings, it should not be timeless.

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Left: Fig. 1 Gustav Klimt, *Philosophy*, 1900–1907. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Right: Fig. 2 Gustav Klimt, *Medicine*, 1900–1907. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

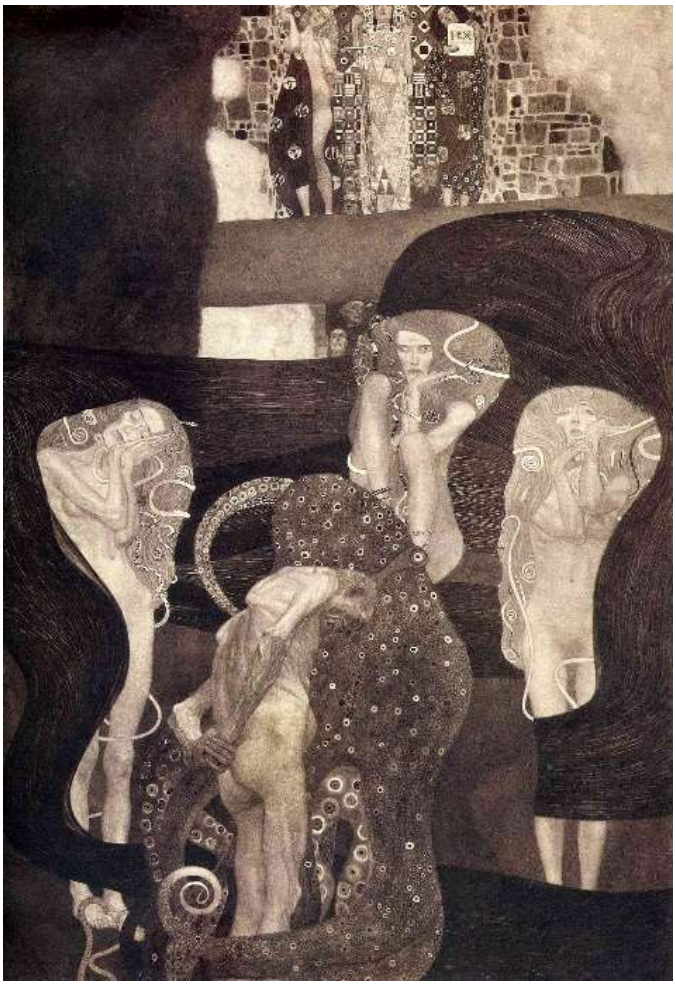

Fig. 3 Gustav Klimt, *Jurisprudence*, 1900–1907. Photos: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 4 Gustav Klimt, *Romeo and Juliet*, 1888. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

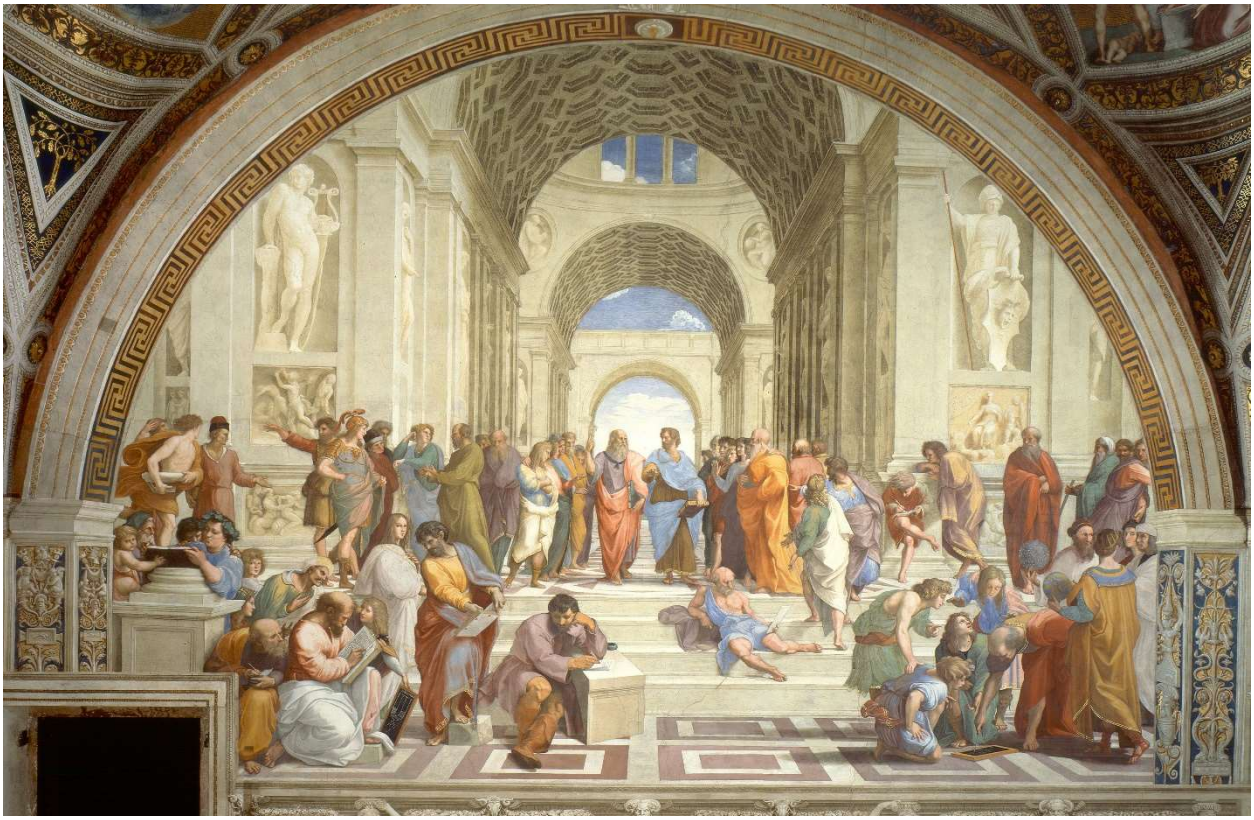

Fig. 5 Raphael, *School of Athens*, c. 1509–1511. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

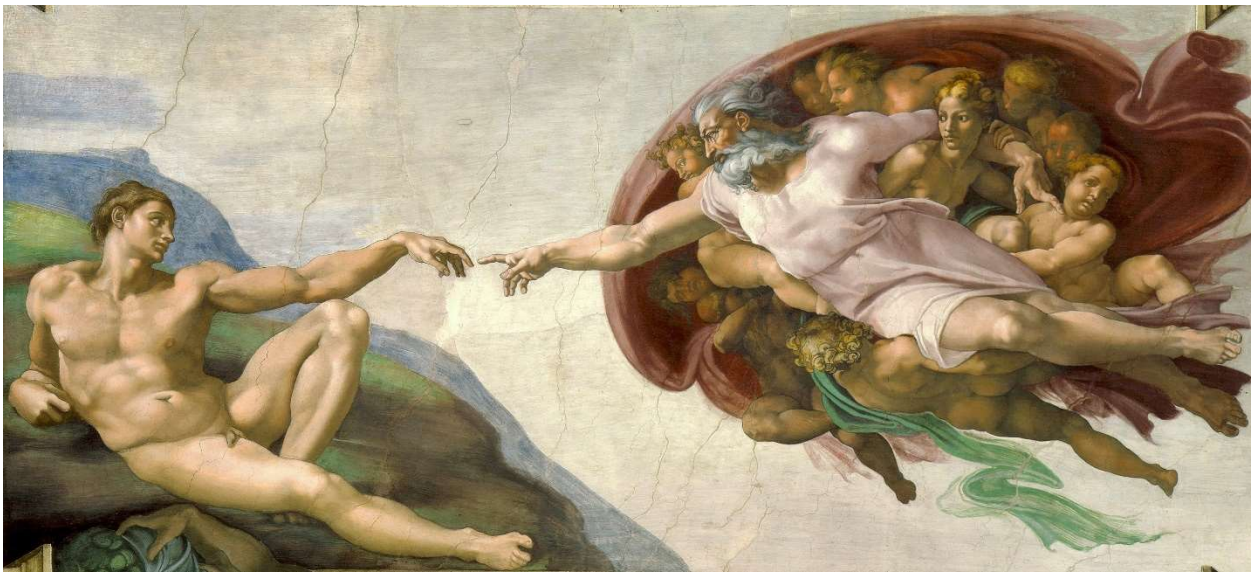

Fig. 6 Michelangelo, *Creation of Adam*, c. 1508–1512.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF RUCKERS KEYBOARDS IN DUTCH SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PAINTINGS

Lisa Packard

Images of musicians were a popular genre in Dutch seventeenth-century painting. While artists often represent the instruments accurately, some go one step further to depict instruments with recognizable characteristics of highly respected instrument makers. This is the case in paintings by Johannes Vermeer, Gabriel Metsu, Jan Steen, and Jan Miense Molenaer that include keyboard instruments with distinctive markings of those made by the Ruckers family. The quality of Ruckers instruments was renowned in Flanders, the Dutch Republic, England, and France.[1] These keyboard instruments were highly sought after as works of art during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to have a Ruckers instrument in one's home elevated the status of that family. This paper will explore the iconographic significance of deliberately and carefully rendered Ruckers keyboards in Dutch musician paintings. Because identifiable Ruckers instruments appear in only a small number of paintings, we can presume that the artists wanted the craftsmanship, reputation, and cultural significance of those particular instruments to augment the meanings of their paintings.

Ruckers instruments were synonymous with quality craftsmanship, superior sound, and elevated social status.[2] The Ruckers-Couchet family (which will be referred to as Ruckers throughout) was based in Antwerp, Belgium, starting in the 1500s. In 1579, Hans Ruckers, the patriarch, joined the Guild of St. Luke. Although it was mostly made up of painters, engravers, printers, glaziers and sculptors, a group of clavicimbel makers banded together within the guild to receive the same

[1] Roy Sonnema, "Experiencing A Ruckers Virginal," *Southeastern College Art Conference Review* 12, no. 2 (1992): 64.

[2] I was able to receive information and clarification on Ruckers instruments and how they are made through current keyboard makers, Cary Beebe and Ted Robertson. Both are makers and restorers of keyboard instruments. They provided information, detail, and history about Ruckers instruments and keyboard instruments in general through many email conversations in March 2021. General information can be found on their websites.

support.[3] Within this group, the artists were able to support each other, and some even painted the lids and soundboards of Ruckers instruments.[4] The decorations on Flemish instruments had become famous, and this helped the builders have a better control over design and production in general. The need for decoration helped the painters and printers discover new ways to utilize their talents during a time when the art market was in low demand.[5] Two aspects of a Ruckers instrument that made it so popular and valuable were the high-quality construction and the rich sound. Instead of the keyboards being on the left or in the center, they are located on the right, which created an entirely new sound. Not only this, but the strings used were thicker than what was normally used, creating a deeper tone. As the years went on, the Ruckers' reputation equaled that of the Italian violin craftsman Antonio Stradivari. The harpsichords and virginals produced by the family varied greatly, yet, to date, the instruments produced by this family are those that have survived better than any other from the era.[6]

Many artistic elements distinguish a Ruckers instrument from those of other makers. For example, the signature rose holding the initials of the maker (Fig. 1). It was typically surrounded by a wreath of leaves or flowers. Although traditionally it was merely a sound hole, it was soon turned into a decorative element as well. The rose of the muselar virginal in the Metropolitan Museum is special because included within the wreath is a white tulip. Although it is merely a painted tulip, the fact that a tulip is included at all elevates the owner to a higher status because they "own" a tulip, something that came about with the tulip mania of the seventeenth century.[7]

Another decorative element that was part of a Ruckers instrument was the

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[3] Grant O'Brien, *Ruckers: A Harpsichord and Virginal Building Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16.

[4] Sonnema, 63. Artists: Pieter Codde II, Jan Breughel I, Hendrik van Balen, Paul Brill, Artus Wolfort, and Peter Paul Rubens (there is no known knowledge of the Rubens lid painting having survived). It was never believed to be demeaning of their status or popularity to paint on an instrument, especially a Ruckers.

[5] Ibid, 64.

[6] Edward L. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 104.

[7] O'Brien, 419.

dolphin paper pattern, an example of which can be seen in the virginal in Johannes Vermeer's *The Music Lesson* (1662–65) (Figs. 2, 3). This paper pattern was unique to Flemish instruments, especially those made by the Ruckers.[8] The patterned paper was used in place of paintings as time went on, making the instruments more affordable as less time was needed to finish them and the patterned paper was cheaper. However, this did not make the Ruckers' instruments any less valuable in the home or in representing Flemish family life. Although the papers were similar, there would be different levels of artistry and effort put into them. A comparison of the two different types reveals a black version and a white version. The white version could easily be made, only small amounts of the pattern having to be carved away from the wood to make the required pattern.[9] This required minimal effort and was more common than the black version. The black version required skill, sharp eyes, and meticulous detail. It was the negative of the white version, and had more wood carved away to create the desired pattern of the dolphin and fleur-de-lis. These patterns were taken from Renaissance pattern books that were used by decorators to enhance their work. The book by Sylvius is based on Arabic and Moorish art and includes "stylized vines, leaves, ribbons, and bands interlaced together sometimes in the form of knots of geometrical patterns and sometimes as exotic arabesques."[10]

The exterior of a Ruckers instrument was also decorated extensively, making it clear that the virginals or harpsichords were works of art. The outside of a virginal was usually painted to resemble green marble, but could also be painted in red. The marbling of these instruments is clearly seen in Vermeer's *Lady Seated at a Virginal* (1670–72) (Fig. 4) and *Lady Standing at a Virginal* (1670–72) (Fig. 5). Sometimes, along the edges, an imitation of iron strapwork was painted with highlights and shadows to make it appear real.[11] When these instruments are closed, they appear as nothing more than a simple piece of furniture. However,

[8] Ibid, 394.

[9] Augusto Bonza and Grant O'Brien, "Notes & Queries: The 'H. Ruckers' Double Virginal in Milan. Two Important New Discoveries," *The Galpin Society Journal* 52 (1999): 319.

[10] Grant O'Brien, "Ruckers paper designs made from wood blocks hand cut by Grant O'Brien," 2003. http://www.claviantica.com/Ruckers_papers.htm.

[11] Bonza and O'Brien, 322-323.

with the added marbling and painted strapwork, the instrument no longer looks like a simple end table but rather appears as a grand and valuable piece of furniture. The status of the owner was clear even when the instrument was not on "display" or was being played.[12]

These decorative measures were used on the instruments to set them apart from those of other makers and clearly reflect the value of such an instrument within Flemish households.[13] These instruments elevated the class of the owners, not just because they could afford a musical instrument but because they could specifically afford a Ruckers instrument. Since Vermeer's station and finances would not allow him to own such an instrument, it is more likely that he had seen such instruments inside homes of patrons or in traveling to homes with musical collections.[14] The virginals Vermeer depicts in *The Music Lesson*, *A Lady Seated at a Virginal*, and *A Lady Standing at a Virginal* are most likely from the Ruckers family because the marbling on the outside and the lid designs are similar to a Ruckers virginal.[15]

The *Woman at the Virginal* (c. 1637) (Fig. 6) by Jan Miense Molenaer also includes a Ruckers instrument to denote the status of this family. A lady, most likely a mother, is playing an instrument with a simple garden scene painted onto the lid. Her children stand listening by her side and in the doorway stands a man, who is presumably her husband. The way the family invites the viewer to observe them surrounding a beautifully crafted virginal both brings to light the importance of family and symbolizes their wealth. This instrument could be a Ruckers due to the paper decorations and the red accents that resemble red marble. The instrument is a show of wealth because of the Ruckers name that is most likely attached. Although this particular instrument is not surrounded by other works of art, it does not mean it is not a fine work of art in itself. As a Ruckers instrument, it already has the reputation of superior quality. With it being the only art piece within the room, its status as both an instrument and a work of art is emphasized.

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[12] Sonnema, 65.
[13] Ibid, 62.
[14] Adelheid Rech, "Musical Instruments in Vermeer's Paintings: The Virginals," Essential Vermeer. Accessed April 22, 2021. http://www.essentialvermeer.com/.
[15] Ibid.

Because of the quality of sound and beautiful craftsmanship of a Ruckers instrument, it was no longer seen as just an instrument but as a work of art that makes music.[16] When a Ruckers virginal is displayed as a work of art, its decoration "produces a visual effect that is as rich as the aural."[17] The purpose of the instrument's decoration was to invite those listening to the musical performance to engage their other senses as well, thus enveloping the audience members in the performance. An example of this is the double virginal by Hans Ruckers the Elder (Fig. 7). On the lid is painted a garden scene with the soundboard covered in various flowers, plants, and animals (Figs. 8, 9). The visual key of the painting found on the lid and soundboard engages the other senses by way of memory. The visual of the garden scene on the lid and "flowerbed" of the soundboard conjures up memories of times spent in good company, enjoying the warmth of sunlight and fresh air. Aural memories of being in a garden can also be stirred by the implied sounds of the birds and insects that are perched and crawling along the soundboard and the implied soft chatter of the people in the garden scene. This sense of hearing can also arouse memories of previous concerts that the listener has attended, to reminisce about good music and charming company of friends, family, and perhaps the music of a successful courtship. The cherries painted on the soundboard allude to the sense of taste by memories of the tart sweetness of biting into one. The flowers depicted on both the soundboard and within the garden evoke the smells experienced when surrounded by the sweet scents of a flowerbed.[18]

To provide spiritual moments and memories, many Dutch paintings centered on nature and God, and so it is not surprising that landscapes were included on Ruckers instruments. The pleasure garden scene found on the lid of the double virginal was one that was popular at the time among artists and was commonly found framed or on the instrument.[19] Although the artist of this specific scene is unknown, the image portrayed and the meaning it conveys is still clear. The figures

[16] Sonnema, 63.
[17] O'Brien, *Ruckers: A Harpsichord and Virginal Building Tradition*, 384.
[18] Mary Mobbs, "Painting Harpsichord Soundboards - My Memories" *Harpsichord & Fortepiano* 13, no. 1 (2008): 11.
[19] "Double Virginal." metmuseum.org. Met Museum. Accessed April 22, 2021. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/503676.

inside the painting are depicted at their leisure, enjoying the outdoors and each other's company. Mixed within the figures are several instruments, either sitting idly by or being played. This "paints" the pleasurable qualities of music and that it was to be enjoyed. It was important for an individual to set aside time for musical entertainment to restore balance and harmony by forgetting their problems for a time and connecting with family, friends, or even a courting pair.[20] To further the idea of a pleasure garden, the soundboard has flowers scattered about it, their appearance looking as if "they are actually growing out of the soundboard of the instrument, allegorically representing the songs and musical compositions that are played on the virginal."[21] The entire instrument represents a garden of delights, but not the fanciful delights of aristocracy. The delights are those found within a group of friends and family such as spending time together, enjoying the outdoors (God's creations), and finding a balanced life of work and play. The clear representation of family values is seen in the lid with the status of family in their fine dress, the musical instruments, and the fact that they are in a well-kept garden.

The complementary relationship between art, music, and nature is evident in two paintings by Vermeer. In his *A Lady Standing at a Virginal*, a virginal is surrounded by framed paintings on the wall and is being showcased as a work of high value.[22] The painted lid decoration may seem to be just a simple landscape; however, this landscape is an almost perfect reflection of the landscape painting hanging on the wall to the left of the lady. In Vermeer's *The Concert*, (c. 1664) (Fig. 10) the harpsichord is open, and we see on the lid a painting depicting a serene landscape that appears as a complement to the landscape painting hanging on the wall to the left. Positioned flatly in between the landscape painting at the left and the painting at the right of a lute player of Dirck van Baburen's *The Procuress*, the harpsichord is presented as work of art. Additionally, the favorable connotations of the landscapes are projected onto the figures making music and we read their musical performance as one governed by harmony, modesty, and decorum.

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[20] Sonnema, 66. This was a popular understanding that was found in Dutch and Flemish songbooks.

[21] Ibid, 66. Individual songs were sometimes referred to as 'little flowers' growing in the garden, waiting to be plucked and enjoyed by the participants.

[22] Ibid, 63.

While some keyboard instruments have painted lids, others have a Latin motto inscribed on the lid or front panel that functions in a similar way of providing both decoration and commentary on the music-making. The mottoes invite a "moment of philosophical and literary contemplation" which elevated the music making.[23] These mottoes can also be taken to a spiritual level leading the family and friends participating in the performance onto a higher plane of spiritual understanding, deepening the connection of harmony not only with the music and the individual, but the family as well. On the front panel of a double virginal by Hans Ruckers is the inscription MVSICA DVLCE LABORVM LEVAMEN ("Sweet music is a balm for toil") (Fig. 11). The combination of this statement with the painting of the pleasure garden and music making on the lid connotes feelings of unity and calm that were important to Netherlandish families. A similar Latin motto seen in Vermeer's *Music Lesson* reads MVSICA LETITIAE COMES MEDICINA DOLORVM ("Music is the companion of joy, balm for sorrow") (Fig. 12). Although the painting depicts a music lesson, the message is clear: music is a comfort that can and should be learned. Music should not always just be for pleasure and entertainment but for healing and companionship as well, forging bonds between family, friends, and God.

A muselar virginal by Joannes Ruckers has a Latin inscription painted on its lid: OMNIS SPIRITVS LAVDET DOMINVM ("Let every breath praise the Lord") (Fig. 13). Although the virginal is sounded by fingers and not the voice, it is often accompanied by a singer, thus referencing "every breath praising the Lord" and inviting all to enjoy the blessings of the music. Gabriel Metsu includes a similar motto praising God on the lid of the virginal in his *Lady at a Virginal* (c. 1660–67) (Fig. 14). Although the woman obscures some of the letters, it likely reads IN TE DOMINE SPERAVI, NON CONFUNDAR IN AETERNUM ("In Thee, Lord have I put my trust, let me never be confounded").[24] These Latin mottoes and others depicted in paintings of Ruckers instruments and on the instruments themselves, bring the instrument to a level where they are being used in both a spiritual sense and a

[23] Ibid, 62.

[24] Ian F. Finlay, "Musical Instruments in 17th-Century Dutch Paintings," *The Galpin Society Journal* 6 (1953): 61.

physical sense. Sonnema claims that the importance of these Latin mottoes and many others is that they frame the "experience within established literary traditions of classical and moralist commentary on music."[25]

However, not all mottoes suggest that the music making is for providing comfort or praising God. Jan Steen's *A Young Woman Playing a Harpsichord to a Young Man* (c. 1659) (Fig. 15) depicts a young woman seated at a Ruckers harpsichord intently playing from a songbook while a man, who is presumably her admirer, leans on the top of the instrument. The motto inscribed on the front reads, SOLI DEO GLORI ("Glory to God alone") and leads the viewer to presume that the woman is engrossed in music-making for the glory of God. But a second inscription positioned vertically on the lid reads, ACTA VIRUM PROBANT ("Actions prove the man"). Could it be that this man is going to join in a duet with the woman, perhaps with the theorbo brought by the servant entering through the doorway in the back of the room? In this case, the music-making assumes association with love, which was common in Dutch paintings, and we read the painting as one where the instrument – both its visual appeal as an expensive work of art and its aural appeal as a beautifully sounding instrument – is essential for facilitating a courtship between the elegant couple.

In addition to the inscriptions on the instruments in Steen's and Metsu's paintings, we see that the artists have signed their names on the instruments. Steen's signature of "Johannes Steen Fecit" appears prominently between the distinctive Ruckers dolphin pattern paper and the woman's hands on the keyboard. Metsu signs his name more subtly beneath the motto on the virginal lid. Because both instruments display hallmark traits of a Ruckers instrument, it is clear the artists want the viewer to see them as not merely keyboard instruments but rather the finest and most highly valued examples of keyboard instruments. Perhaps by placing their signatures so prominently on the instruments and not in the corners of their paintings, they are laying claim to their status as artists by association with the status of the instruments and the elevated music they provide.

Ruckers' keyboard instruments were central to the middle-class home, not only for the spiritual enlightenment and aiding courtship rituals, but also for

[25] Sonnema, 65-66.

accommodating musical gatherings of family and friends. Such an intimate concert is depicted in *The Concert* by Johannes Vermeer, which includes a harpsichord reminiscent of the one by Jan Couchet the Elder, the grandson of Hans Ruckers (Fig. 16). *The Concert* depicts a small group of people making music, perhaps in the tradition of *hausmusik,* or domestic concerts and gatherings that were deemed a socially acceptable way for an eligible bachelor to meet and court a young lady.[26] Gathering as family and friends to enjoy music making was popular among middle-class families. However, the purpose was not just to create music but also to draw people closer together, whether in a family relationship, a friendship, or a possible romantic relationship.[27] Connections with familial harmony are manifest in Molenaer's *Family Portrait*, (1635) (Fig. 17) where he depicts his family holding musical instruments in their home. Upon closer observation, we can see that the virginal on the left side is clearly representative of a Ruckers type (Fig. 18). The paper pattern on the flap is a black and white pattern. Although it lacks the Ruckers dolphin pattern, its placement on the keyboard is consistent with a Ruckers instrument. On the lid is painted a landscape scene with figures, and the lid has clear indications of flowers painted on it. Such a fine instrument included in concert with the family serves as an indication of their elevated social status.

The term "virginal" has ties to the family, the individual, and what they each represent. A common interpretation of the term is based on the instrument usually being played by young women (virgins).[28] Vermeer's *A Lady Seated at the Virginal* shows a young woman at a Ruckers-style virginal looking out at the viewer. Although she is depicted alone, she engages the viewer with her gaze, which alludes to the importance of *hausmusik* for courtship. The status of the lady is suggested not only through the Ruckers-style virginal and the landscape lid painting but also by the woman's clothing, the golden-framed painting, marble floors, rich drapery, and another musical instrument. The young woman is depicted as a well-bred young lady who is ready to be courted. The connotations of the prominently placed virginal and the landscape painted on the lid connecting the idea of nature

[26] Sonnema, 65.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Rech (see FN 14).

being representative of the divine and the spirit may reflect the spirituality of the lady. Not only is she virtuous and pure but she is also spiritually inclined. However, the inclusion on the back wall of Baburen's painting *The Procuress* introduces a contradiction and makes us question the intentions of the anticipated duet.

In some cases, the virginal as the chosen instrument for the young woman comments on the respected and valued role of motherhood. The idea of the virginal representing harmony and devotion like a mother to her children is amplified with a mother-and-child virginal. A mother-and-child virginal has two sets of keyboards: the main one (the mother) and a hidden one that can be pulled out (the child) (Fig. 19). The idea is that while "the mother" plays at a regular octave, "the child" plays at one octave higher, thus conveying the idea of harmony and devotion.[29] This idea is carried further by the ability to place "the child" atop "the mother", allowing a single player to play both octaves simultaneously by playing just "the mother" keyboard. This positioning parallels the care and devotion mothers pay to their children as they carefully watch over and train them. The lid painting is also important because it depicts a pleasure garden like the Hans Ruckers double virginal (Fig. 20). However, this painting has a lady playing a virginal with a lid painting of its own. The idea of motherhood is clearly expressed in this lid painting because the physical instrument, the mother, is cradling a smaller but separate instrument, the child. The child will always be connected to the mother. She will continually care for him, but she must eventually let him go and carry a memory, or in this case a lid painting, of her time with him.

Virginals, harpsichords, and clavichords in Dutch seventeenth-century paintings by Vermeer, Metsu, Steen, and Molenaer had much deeper meanings than just being a musical instrument to be played. When the instrument was recognized as a Ruckers, these artists clearly intended to elevate the status of the figures in the paintings as well as themselves as artists. Although the musical qualities these instruments possessed through their particular Ruckers sound was unmatched, the visual decorations on the instruments made them fine works of art that complemented framed paintings of landscapes that hung in Dutch homes. A

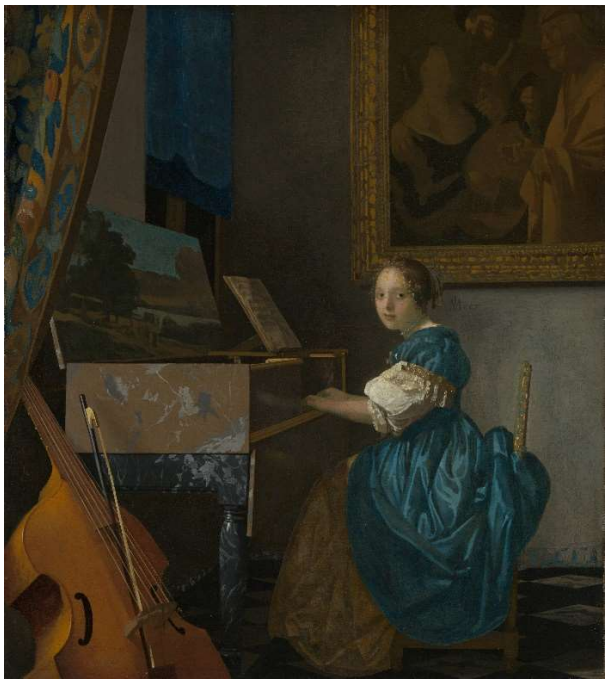
[29]Museo Degli Strumenti Musicali. "Double Virginal, Ioannes Ruckers." Accessed April 20, 2021, https://strumentimusicali.milanocastello.it/it/content/virginale-doppio-ioannes-ruckers

Ruckers instrument was more than just an object to produce music. It was a symbol of the behavior and beliefs found within a Dutch family and a means for teaching moral and spiritual values.

Fig. 1. Ioannes Ruckers, Gilded rose detail from Muselar Virginal, 1622. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY.

Fig. 2. Johannes Vermeer, *The Music Lesson*, 1662–1665. Royal Collection. London, England. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 3. Detail of Fig. 2. Virginal in Vermeer's, *The Music Lesson*.



Left: Fig. 4. Johannes Vermeer, *Lady Seated at a Virginal*, c. 1670–1672. National Gallery. London, England. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Right: Fig. 5. Johannes Vermeer, *Lady Standing at a Virginal*, c. 1670–1672. National Gallery. London, England. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 6. Jan Miense Molenaer, *Woman at the Virginal*, c. 1637. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 7. Hans Ruckers the Elder, Double Virginal, 1581. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY.

Fig. 8. Detail of Fig. 7. Painted lid of Hans Ruckers the Elder, Double Virginal, 1581. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY.

Fig. 9. Painted soundboard detail of Hans Ruckers the Elder, Double Virginal, 1581. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY.

Fig. 10. Johannes Vermeer, *The Concert*, c. 1664. Whereabouts unknown. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 11. Detail of Fig. 7. Latin motto on Hans Ruckers the Elder, Double Virginal, 1581. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY.

Fig. 12. Detail of Fig. 2. Latin motto on the virginal in Johannes Vermeer's *The Music Lesson*. 1662–1665.

Fig. 13. Ioannes Ruckers, Muselar Virginal, 1622. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY.

Fig. 14. Gabriel Metsu, *Lady at a Virginal*, c. 1660–1667. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Left: Fig. 15. Jan Steen, *A Young Woman Playing a Harpsichord to a Young Man*, c. 1659. National Gallery. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Right: Fig. 16. Jan Couchet the Elder, Harpsichord, c. 1650. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY.

Left: Fig. 17. Jan Miense Molenaer, *Self–Portrait with Family Members*, 1635. Frans Hals Museum. Haarlem, Netherlands. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Right: Fig. 18. Detail of Fig. 17. Virginal in Jan Miense Molenaer's *Self–Portrait with Family Members*, 1635.

Fig. 19. Ioannes Ruckers, Double Virginal, c. 1600. Photo: Creative Commons, licensed under (CC BY–SA 4.0)

Fig. 20. Detail of Fig. 19. Lid painting on Ruckers Double Virginal, c. 1600.

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VISUAL LANGUAGE THAT MAKES YOU CRY

Katy Cerna

To the untrained eye, many do not consider Modern art to be fine art due to the abstract compositions and the conceptualization of the subject matter. Growing up, I used to think the same thing. How could art be art if it wasn't realistic? There are some artists considered to be among the greatest of all time, but what made twentieth century art so great? After many years of trying to answer my own question, I learned that Modern art becomes more amazing when you learn about its history. It is like learning a new language, and understanding the visual language of art through looking at it can touch your soul. This soul touching is how it felt for me when I first laid eyes on Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*.

Many stories about Pablo Picasso had been shared with me since before I knew I wanted to be an artist. He presented a masterful composition that has left a strong impression on the world. To the untrained eye, Picasso's most famous works can be seen as radical, untalented, and kind of excessive. However, the more I came to learn about Picasso and the role he played in art and in the modern world, the more he has become a favorite artist of mine.

I grew up hearing about Picasso's impact and style a lot in elementary school and in high school. In elementary school, I saw one of his paintings in the school library for the first time. It depicted a human head but with parts of the face rearranged to appear flat and abstract. I wondered as to why his art was considered art because it showed none of the qualities of depth, realism, or any of the design principles that I was learning. Then in high school, I learned that he could paint realistically at 14 years old and was considered a prodigy. Over time, I assumed that

he got bored with realism and focused his efforts on emotion and experimentation. His blue period and ceramic imprinted fish bones interested me, and I wanted to learn more. I first became very intrigued when my high school art teacher showed me Picasso's *The Bull* because I found it so fascinating to see the actual process of how Picasso's mind worked. In this painting, you can see the transition he made from drawing a realistic bull to simple lines and shapes of what we assume to be an abstracted bull. I wanted to learn more, and that is when I learned about *Guernica.* I learned that Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* from 1937 is among his most recognized paintings. Amid the Spanish Civil War, Picasso created this work to raise awareness of the town that was bombed by the Nazis. The bombing destroyed most of the town leaving mothers, fathers, and children dead in seconds. This piece has been an anti-war symbol through the sorrow it depicts. In that way, it serves as a voice for peace.

I had the opportunity to visit Europe for two months back in 2018, so I obviously had to make time to see *Guernica*, which is in the Reina Sofía museum in Madrid. I flew in with a friend to Paris, we stayed there a few days and then started a 40-day long trek along El Camino de Santiago. After walking 500 miles, visiting Portugal, southern Spain, and Barcelona along the way, we finally ended in Madrid. Madrid was our final destination because it was our way back home. I was elated to be there, sad to leave, yet excited to tell everyone my stories at home in Utah. Growing up life was hard; money was always tight, and I never was really happy until later in life. Traveling and learning about art through its history gave me the opportunity to find happiness and purpose again. Unknowingly, I made seeing *Guernica* my sign of knowing I had reached what I was looking for.

While traveling, I became familiar with many artworks from different periods but never cried once. I saw works of Japanese calligraphy, Guatemalan architecture, Puerto Rican music, Hawaiian tribal art tattoos and Portuguese mosaics. In Barcelona I saw paintings from Picasso's Blue Period and walked where the artist used to have coffee with a few friends. Now that I was in Madrid, it was time to see *Guernica.* Just a disclaimer: I don't get emotional over looking at art. Although art made me happy, it never made me cry. However, that all changed once my friend and I entered the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in

Madrid. It was really big and overwhelming but beautiful and full of works ranging from Picasso to Joan Miró. I took my time to look through all the unique works from various artists until I finally reached the large corridor just before the *Guernica.* This corridor was filled with the history of what happened during the Spanish Civil War and the all the events leading up to the bombing in Guernica, Spain.

I, however, skipped all that first and rushed to see the *Guernica.* I was so anxious to see the mural that I had to push my way through the huge crowd of people until I reached the giant opening of the room that held the *Guernica* and just stared at it. Then came the water works, I couldn't stop them! For some reason the *Guernica* brought to life all the trauma and hope that I had experienced as a child and an adult. The giant composition and scale of the piece was overwhelming. Picasso's use of a gray monochromatic palette and the drama of the dismembered bodies stole my attention. Although I personally have never experienced war or death in this way, I felt this connection of loss, tragedy, and despair. For example, staring at the horse screaming with its head distorted reminded me of my anxiety, or people to the right staring with fear in their eyes reminded me of my fear of losing everything I loved. I was sad, dramatic, and hopeless at this time, but knowing the history about the *Guernica* gave me the reassurance that I can rebuild just like the city did and I had hope. I didn't need to fight with myself anymore and Picasso did that for me.

Now when I look at pictures of *Guernica* it just doesn't do it justice. This mural is huge, impacting, emotional, and is something to experience in person. Knowing the history behind art and then seeing it in person makes those events and feelings truly come alive. Those strong feelings can be overwhelming to the point where one cries. Learning that visual language in the *Guernica* taught me a new way to love art and that art moves people to feel strong emotions that they didn't know were there.

ANITA MALFATTI: THE BRAZILIAN MODERN ARTIST

Lexia Lynes

I first encountered Anita Malfatti in my history of Modern art class. For my final paper on a contemporary artist, I wanted to select an artist who was less well known than the painters we had discussed in class. I found Malfatti via an online search, and as I dug more, I knew I needed to write a report about her. She was subject to a slew of adversities, most of which stemmed from her gender. The issue remains relevant today, where many female artists face similar struggles as Malfatti. I found her inspiring, since she was driven out of her community and criticized for refusing to adhere to the conventional rules for women at the time. She was able to achieve things that only outlaw women could do back then: she toured the globe, studied with male colleagues, and brought an art movement to a world that was still trapped in the past.

Anita Malfatti was the painter responsible for introducing Brazil to the modernist movements taking place in Europe and America at the time. Originally born Ana Catarina Malfatti, she was born to an immigrant family in São Paulo on December 2, 1889. Her father worked as an engineer and her mother was a primary instructor who inspired her to explore creatively as a child. Malfatti painted right-handed despite being left-handed due to a congenital condition that rendered her left arm practically motionless. However, she was undeterred in her pursuit of art.

Some of Malfatti's early challenges were a result of the changing cultural history of Brazil in the early twentieth century. It was difficult to pursue painting in Brazil at the time. In comparison to their European rivals, they lacked cultural institutions and had a narrow scope of art theory. Much of the art produced in Brazil at the period was in a Classical or Romantic style and was focused on patriotic interpretations of Brazilian pride and culture. When Malfatti began her studies at

Mackenzie College in São Paulo, the local artistic culture was insufficient to pique her interest, and she was frequently chastised for her unusual works, as well as her refusal to accept the female role that was expected of her at the time.

She left Brazil in 1912 and traveled the world in search of inspiration and artistic freedom. Her first stop was in Berlin where the Sounderbund Exhibition in Cologne had a significant impact on her creative approach. It lasted from May to September 1912 and featured a diverse range of artists. Although there were several post-impressionist paintings on display, Cubism by far dominated the show. She traveled to the United States in 1915, where she became fascinated by German Expressionism, a style that emphasized the use of color and emotional subjects. In New York, Malfatti was an outstanding student at the Independent School of Art where she studied with painters George and Dimitri Romanoffsky. Her time with Homer Boss was most influential because of his extensive study of human anatomy.

Malfatti was the first Brazilian artist to exhibit in the style of European and American Modernism in her country. She presented her own solo show, Exposição de Pintura Moderna (Modern Painting Exhibition), in São Paulo, Brazil from December 12, 1917, to January 11, 1918. Although she had no expectation or desire for her paintings to cause controversy, this is exactly what happened, in part, because the Modernist movement was considered forbidden. Several of her acquaintances and even family members expressed dissatisfaction with her unorthodox works. One of her harshest critics, Monteiro Lobato, condemned her for having “a Brazilian inauthentic intellect” and called Modernism “abnormal,” equating it to psychopathological art. Despite harsh criticism, the solo exhibition was Brazil’s first introduction to Cubism, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Futurism. Malfatti was essential in bringing about a transformation in Brazilian art, and her return home coincided with the beginning of the demand for a new and innovative artistic tradition. A few years later in 1922, Malfatti’s contributions to Modern art were recognized when she exhibited at The Week of Modern Art along with other Brazilian Modernist painters Tarsila do Amaral, Mario de Andrade, Menotti del Picchia, and Oswald de Andrade. These artists gained the moniker “The Group of Five.” Their works that year contributed to dramatic leaps in how Modern art was viewed in Brazil.

Before her death, Malfatti had several exhibits in Brazil, and from 1941 until 1946 she served as president and director of the Sindicatos Nacional dos Artistas Plásticos. However, she will always be remembered as the artist who introduced Modernism to Brazil, which was no minor task. Malfatti had an entire room dedicated to her art during the Sao Paulo Biennial of Arts in 1963, only a year before her death – a fitting tribute to Brazil's first modern painter. Today, she is still one of the country's most iconic painters.

Malfatti, in my opinion, is a tremendous example to female artists today since she was not scared to show people what she believed in and produce art the way she wanted. She teaches that even if your work is rejected in your lifetime, you must not give up. Even when you face opposition, if you keep trying and working, you will eventually be recognized if you continue pursuing your goals. Malfatti's paintings demonstrate the changing ideals of the twentieth century. In search of her own artistic identity, she explored various styles and found her greatest inspiration from the Modernist movements in Europe and America. Although her painting was never accepted as superior to her first breakthrough, it was enough to leave an everlasting imprint on her original breakthrough, as well as on other Brazilian modernist artists and herself.

ENTRANCED BY ART NOUVEAU: MAGIC AT THE MOA

Lindsay Taylor

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to visit *L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* exhibited at Brigham Young University's Museum of Art. The exhibition was enchanting. The posters capture the excitement and struggles in Paris and the modern world at the turn of the century. They became a popular collector's item and were often pulled off the city walls as soon as they were posted – I completely understand why. The artists have a keen ability to give their life-size posters a vitality that transports you into the streets of Paris. The posters are so good at conveying the energy of the city. One minute you are a patron in a museum, and the next minute you feel as though you have been carried into Paris getting ready to take in a show. Each artist has his own way of pulling you into their story, giving you a glimpse into the nightlife, technology, social climate, and economics of the time. The colorful images are captivating and engaging.

As soon as I arrived at the exhibit, I noticed an inviting café setting situated outside the exhibit enticing me to slow down and take my time. There was no pressure to rush through, although I could not help but be drawn to the Guimard and Dauphine Metro entrance, an illuminated archway with beams of blue, white, and red. I was pulled towards the portal ready to transport me into the nineteenth century. As I stepped out of the tunnel, I instantly noticed posters of performers dutifully entertaining crowds. On my left, I noticed a poster advertising the theatrophone and instantly felt excited for my turn to listen in to the performance taking place on the other end of the line. I was enthralled by Chéret's *Folies Bergere / La Loïe Fuller.* Before I knew it, I was seated in the best seat in the house taking in a performance by Loïe Fuller. The stage had been set, and I was ready for more.

I was drawn toward a variety of works by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Bright, colorful, and playful at first sight, but there was a bewitching black magic here. The performers had a seriousness about them, they were imploring me to realize that there are limits to pleasure. I could not help but feel a little jaded. Dancer or perhaps enchantress *Jane Avril* by Toulouse-Lautrec was there to pull me back into the incantation. Jane stands in an exaggerated S curve with her hands reaching up to her red plumed hat. Her slender figure is draped in a fitted black floor length gown. Snaking around her is a colorful serpent she has likely charmed, hypnotizing both of us with her spell.

Around the corner from Toulouse-Lautrec's works, I was greeted by the lovely *Princess Hyacinth* by Alphonse Mucha. This lithograph stopped me in my tracks. It is easy to become consumed by the beauty of such a piece. I was especially taken by Mucha's use of color: the cool blues juxtaposed with silvery stars. The princess captured my gaze with her piercing blue eyes. I felt the whole world disappear and for a moment I had the princess's full attention. She looks cool and casual leaning her head to her hand. She wears a tall silvery crown dressed in rust-colored flowers. I was under her spell. When I came to my senses, I was drawn toward Mucha's Sarah Beernhardt *as La Dame Aux Camélias*. Her calm demeanor was warm and inviting. Though she would not, or perhaps could not return my gaze, she had an angelic presence that felt otherworldly. I found all of Mucha's lithographs to be mesmerizing and beautiful.

Each work transported me from one part of Paris to another. I felt completely immersed in bohemian life. The only thing missing was a café and pain au chocolat, but honestly, I didn't need sustenance to keep me going; the art was substantial. Occasionally I would listen in on the audio tour and find myself further bewitched; I was reaching the point of no return.

Just as I was finding myself ensnared by each work, Eugène Grasset, like the wizard that he is, hypnotized me, sending me to an alternate but familiar reality with his *Anxiété*. Here I am joined by a lovely woman lying in the grass consumed by her thoughts. She is a kindred spirit. I feel like I know her, and I am familiar with this place where we find ourselves. This mountain field is where I go to feel the blades of grass between my toes, clear my thoughts, and feel grounded again.

Though I have just experienced a magical warp through time and space, Grasset's works are pulling me out of my escape from reality. They wake me up from this lucid dream, lifting the spell that transported me to a new world. Though I am not ready to leave this escape, I sense the end is coming near.

Slowly this spellbound experience begins to fade away, and just like that, I find myself back in the basement of the Museum of Art. There is no telling when a visit to France will come to fruition, but *L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*, was just what I needed to tide me over. It was the perfect escape. This is one of the many reasons I love art, and why this exhibition was so powerful. Art has the ability to seemingly carry you into a custom world connecting you to a larger world outside the limits of reality. It helps you feel seen and if nothing else, give you a moment of refuge. If that's not magic, I don't know what is.