

LUCIAN SIMMONS, CHRISTIE'S
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We are honored to have been asked to sell this Klimt from the famed Zuckerkandl collection. [slide] The history of this one work, which I will talk about tonight, cracks open a window into the world of Klimt's pre-war patrons and their collections. The Zuckerkandls were amongst Klimt's most important supporters – along with the Lederer and Bloch-Bauer families. Victor Zuckerkandl, August Lederer and Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer were all industrialists who had made their fortunes at the end of the 19th Century and who were prepared to divert a sizable proportion of their wealth towards the arts. After Klimt was denied public commissions in the early 20th Century, it was the support of these families and their peers which enabled him to flourish. It also happened that many of Klimt's supporters were Jewish – including the Zuckerkandls - leading some contemporary detractors to dismiss Klimt's work as in "*le goût juif*" for its ornamental superficial style and purported decadence. Members of these families were close acquaintances and business partners friends – helped no doubt that many had common origins in Hungary and Bohemia.

The Zuckerkandl family originated in Győr in Hungary. Like many wealthy Jewish bourgeois families, the Zuckekandls moved to Vienna in the late 19th Century. There is a wonderful account of this migration in the recently published book *The Hare with Amber Eyes* by Edmund de Waal. The head of the family, Leo Zuckerkandl, a grain merchant, died in 1899 leaving five prodigiously talented children: Emil, a leading anatomist; Otto, one of the fathers of modern urology, Robert, an economist; Victor – an iron magnate and finally Amalie.

Probably the most famous member of the Zuckerkandl family, in cultural terms at any rate, was Bertha Zuckerkandl – wife of Emil Zuckerkandl the anatomist.

[**slide**] She was a champion of liberal thought, an outspoken journalist and an Austrian nationalist. It is said, with reason that the Vienna Secession was born in her Salon. It was on her oversized [10 seater] divan that Gustav Mahler first met Alma Schindler. At a later date, in 1932, Albert Einstein met Colette on the same divan (although this meeting was probably less culturally momentous). And it was she who persuaded Rodin to sculpt Mahler. Bertha was a friend and an early and vocal advocate of Gustav Klimt and through her husband's contacts helped him get his major commission for paintings for Vienna University (the paintings which led to his being blacklisted from further public commissions). She also gained Klimt access to the University dissecting rooms to draw cadavers through her husband who was a renowned professor of anatomy.

In 1905, her brother in law, the steel magnate Viktor Zuckerkandl, decided to build a new treatment building at his Sanatorium in Purkersdorf in Vienna. [**slide**] Berta prevailed upon him to commission the fledgling Wiener Werkstätte and Josef Hoffmann in particular to design the complex and its fittings – down to every chair and every spoon. [**slide**] The sanatorium was an exclusive spa which specialized in baths and physical therapy for the treatment of Tuberculosis and neurological disorders. Much like the spas and clinics frequented by today's celebrities, the Purkersdorf sanatorium boasted many celebrities amongst their regulars including Schnitzler, Beer-Hoffmann and Schoenberg. The sanatorium was built 14 hectares in a fashionable suburb of Vienna and was surrounded by elegant villas built for members of the Zuckerkandl family (*which you can see in this slide*).

With his sister in law's encouragement, Victor Zuckerkandl started buying Klimt's paintings in about 1908, initially through a dealer and later direct from the artist. [**slide**] His collection included at least 7 major landscape oils [**slide**] and the artist's iconic image of Pallas Athene as well as a commissioned portrait of his wife. In 1916, Victor moved from Vienna to Berlin and at that time sold off much

of his art collection – however he only sold one major Klimt – the Pallas Athene. [slide] Victor died in Berlin in 1927, followed within weeks by his wife Paula. Six of his seven Klimts stayed in his family and returned back to Austria where many of Victor’s siblings lived in villas in the Purkersdorf compound. There they joined a number of Klimt paintings which the rest of the Zuckerkandl family had acquired independently.

It is horrifying that **All** of the paintings which remained with the Zuckerkandl family in 1938 were lost or displaced after the Anschluss, when the Nazis assumed control of Austria.

Klimt held a certain fascination for the Nazis – whilst his work was far from their Aryan ideals, they cautiously acknowledged him to be an Austrian cultural icon – such that one of the first major retrospectives of his work took place in 1943 in Vienna under patronage from Baldur von Shirach – the Nazi Governor. This, added to the fact that so many of Klimts collectors and patrons were Jewish, led to a huge dispersal of his work during this period.

I should tell you about the fate of a few of the Zuckerkandl Klimts:

Nora Stiasny was Victor’s neice and was married to the director of the sanatorium and lived on the Purkersdorf estate. After an abortive sale of the painting *Apfelbaum II* to a Nazi for a fifth of its market value in August 1938 (abortive because the buyer thought he was getting *Apfelbaum I* which actually belonged to the Bloch Bauers) Mrs Stiasny was strong-armed into pawning her Klimt *Apfelbaum I* for a fraction of its real value. [slide] She perished with her mother Amalie Zuckerkandl in Poland in 1942. Her husband and son died in Auschwitz. Her mother’s portrait by Klimt was sold at a fraction of its value in 1942 and now hangs in the Belvedere in Vienna. [slide]

Paula Zuckerkandl's portrait by Klimt was supposed to have passed to her brother on condition he donate it to the Belvedere in Vienna. This never happened because the painting was destroyed in a bombing raid and because her brother died in Berlin in 1942 shortly before he was due to be deported (in his 80s). [slide]

The landscape *Mohnweise* was abandoned in the Privatvilla in the Purkersdorf compound by Fritz and Trude Zuckerkandl when they fled for France with his mother Bertha Zuckerkandl. The family escaped to France with help from Paul Clemenceau (who was married to Bertha's sister) and then travelled into exile through Casablanca in 1941 to Algiers where they settled for the remainder of the war. Incidentally Berta Zuckerkandl re-established her salon in exile and at the age of 80 captivated residents of wartime Algiers including Andre Gide and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The painting *Mohnwiese* was lost when the privatvilla was Aryanized along with the Sanatorium itself in 1938 but uniquely amongst all the Zuckerkandl Klimts their son was able to recover it after the war. When the family tried to export the painting to their new home on the States in 1948 it was declared Austrian national patrimony and Bertha's grandson ended up selling it for \$1,000 in 1957. It is now in the Belvedere. [slide]

This brings us to the fourth branch of the Zuckerkandl family – who owned this painting. Victor's sister Amalie Redlich [slide] owned three Klimt oils: this painting, *Kirche in Cassone* and an as yet unidentified work described tantalizingly in contemporary documents as “*Blooming Meadows*”. Two of the three, this and the Cassone, came from her late brother Victor.

We now know the fate of two of the paintings – this work and Cassone [slide] - thanks to incredible research undertaken by Ruth Pleyer who we are fortunate to have in the audience tonight.

In 1939, Amalie and her daughter, Mathilde (“Tilde”) Jorisch were evicted from their villa at Purkersdorf and Amalie placed her furniture in store with Zdenko Dworak and paid a hefty bribe of 2000 RM to the foreman (along with generous tips for his crew) in a high risk attempt to stop him from tipping off the Gestapo as to the location of her property. Her important works of art, including the Klimts, she seems to have kept with her. The paintings were taken from her home after her deportation to Lodz in 1941. By coincidence, her own warehousemen Zdenko Dworak were the preferred shippers used by the Gestapo to clear the houses of deportees and seem to have taken the Klimts from her home. In any event, Amalie Redlich’s Klimts were delivered to the Gestapo and probably sold off quite quickly. We know that these two paintings were bought by a Nazi affiliated art dealer named Friedrich Welz who had privileged access to seized goods.

The Cassone went to the Viennese branch of his Gallery (which he had Aryanised from a Jewish gallerist) and was sold by Welz to an Austrian private collector.

Welz exchanged the Litzlberg with the Rupertinum Museum in Salzburg for a Jonkind that had been acquired in Paris for the museum. Thus, became property of the Salzburg collections in about 1944. Ironically the Jonkind was taken from Welz after the war and restituted to the French government as French property.

Tragically both Amalie Redlich and her daughter perished in Poland and their heirs were unable to locate any of Amalie’s three Klimts after the war.

That this work is to be offered for sale at Sotheby’s next week is the result of the perseverance of Amalie Redlich’s grandson – Mathilde Jorisch’s son – Georges Jorisch. Mr Jorisch left Vienna at the age of 10 with his father and spent the war

in hiding, including two years living in a basement in Brussels where his father, a lawyer, gave him a wonderful education in languages, literature and the sciences.

In recent years Georges Jorisch started to look for the paintings using the memory he had from seeing them as a child in his grandmother's house. He recalled the two Klimts – this and the Cassone – were in a big room, with a big red carpet, that wasn't used very often. They hung either side of a bay window. He was able to draw the two paintings from memory and this recollection was a key part of their recovery.

Mr Jorisch's first great victory was last year when the private owner of the Cassone painting agreed to restitute it to him. The painting had remained in a series of private collections since it had been sold by Friedrich Welz during the Nazi period. Following its restitution, the work offered it for sale at Sotheby's in London. The painting sold for \$42m. Following this victory, Mr Jorisch and his legal team entered into negotiations with the Rupertinum Museum in Salzburg for the voluntary return of this painting – Litzelberg am Attersee. I say voluntary because the Rupertinum is not bound by Austrian federal restitution laws. The painting was restituted earlier this year and part of the proceeds will be set aside to build an extension at the museum named in Amalie Redlich's honor.

[slide] Both returns were made possible not only by Georges' determination and the goodwill of the current holders of the two artworks but also by the most incredible research and tireless work by his lawyer and by Ruth Pleyer.

The appearance of this picture in New York for sale is not only the culmination of a quest and the recovery of a lost inheritance for the Zuckerkandl family but also a chance for you all to see a glorious work of art – which is my cue for handing you over to my colleague Elizabeth Gorayeb.

LJS, October 2011