

CORNELIA CABUK



MONOGRAPH

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FOREWORD

MARTIN BÖHM

With the founding of its Research Center, the Belvedere set a new standard in art history research in Austria. As a major national museum it combines the traditional museum tasks of collection, conservation, and research under one roof, taking advantage of the resulting synergies and proactively fostering research. One focus of the Research Center's activities is the compilation of detailed catalogues raisonnés of Austrian artists. These are of great utility to art historians, the art market, collectors, and art lovers alike. The detailed research necessary to produce a catalogue raisonné is time-consuming and requires adequate financing. The Dorotheum is proud to promote these positive endeavors and to support the Belvedere's work on catalogues raisonnés through its sponsorship of its Institute for the Compilation of Catalogues Raisonnés. We attach particular importance in this regard to the independence guaranteed by the Belvedere's experts. We are pleased to present the latest result of our successful collaboration in the form of this catalogue raisonné of the works of Otto Rudolf Schatz and to have been able to make a significant contribution to its production.

DOROTHEUM
SEIT 1707

FOREWORD

STELLA ROLLIG

Following on from Carry Hauser, the seventh volume of the Belvedere catalogues raisonnés is devoted to Otto Rudolf Schatz, another artist whose work was out of the public eye for a long time as a result of the vagaries of history, the ban on painting imposed by the Nazis, and his forced exile. The gradual rediscovery of these artists has made it possible to revise the notion that Austrian art in the interwar years was generally traditional, dominated by expressive, colorist trends, not particularly modern, and parochial. On the contrary, after 1918, a creative and experimental dialogue developed among young artists in their twenties—many of whom were traumatized by their war experiences—leading them from Dadaism, Constructivism, and Kineticism to New Objectivity and Surrealism, often as a subculture outside of the mainstream and in a mutual exchange with other categories of art.

Otto Rudolf Schatz was born in 1900—a member of the first generation of the twentieth century in Austria, for whom the year 1918 signified a shift in outlook and the beginning of a promising new era. The end of the Monarchy and the ousting of the political powers responsible for the disaster of World War I resulted on the one hand in devastating food shortages, yet on the other it also nourished utopian ideas and, in particular, theories and visions for renewing society. A completely new conception of art, new media like cinema and photography, but also dance and theater played an important role in this new outlook. Schatz, as an “anti-aesthete,” saw his art as a work for society and an expression of this new era.

Together with like-minded colleagues he was part of the young Central-European avant-garde, a loose network of artists, mostly hailing from countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, linked by new magazines and transnational associations. Both the subjects and the method of expression in Schatz’s work are examples of new artistic parameters and modes that reflected the realities of life and everyday experience, without being based on past epochs or styles.

Schatz created remarkable and distinctive works, in which he drew attention to the situation of a society in transition. In monumental panels he presented scenes “from the margins of society” and typical characters from the Prater milieu, at the same time condemning the racial discrimination in society. The unadorned realism of his pictorial narratives gave rise to bewilderment and incomprehension from reviewers and the public. Today his pictures are seen as an important contribution to New Objectivity in Austria. The Hagenbund accepted Schatz as a member and gave him a platform for his art.

Disregarding the conventional artistic canon of portrait, landscape, and still life, Schatz focused on the working conditions of women, craftsmen, and the proletariat. In masterly woodcuts he described survival strategies on the edge of society at a time of unemployment and economic crisis. His murals and graphic works in the style of constructive objectivity promoted the public education and housing program of the Social Democratic Art Council, until the civil war in 1934 put an end to it. As a political artist at a time of political turmoil before and during World War II, Schatz painted seemingly innocuous landscapes, in which he sublimated the wanderlust and love of vagabondage from his earlier years

in the face of the precarious political situation. In their transcendent sense of timelessness, they show different European regions seen through the lens of Magic Realism. Collaborative drawings and collages in the visitors' books of close friends and colleagues can be seen as political statements of dissent and a response to events of the time. They merge Dadaist collage, Surrealist elements, and political caricature in original and multilayered combinations. The fact that Modernism and its artists were now being persecuted and ostracized, prompted Schatz to take a closer look at their achievements. Together with his Jewish wife, he visited New York with a view to emigrating from an increasingly fascist Europe. Portrayed in a Modernist pictorial language, his pictures from the American metropolis convey one message above all: Schatz's firm belief in the freedom of art.

The success he achieved with these works, helped by the enthusiastic reviews of his exhibition *New York: Travel Pictures by Otto Rudolf Schatz* at the Neue Galerie, the Hagenbund in Vienna and in Brussels, came to an abrupt end with the arrival of the Nazis in Austria. Banned from working or pursuing his career as an artist and living in occupied Prague, Schatz painted a number of miniature landscapes expressing his state of "inner exile." Political resistance and concentration camp internment marked his experience of World War II. After 1945, with the support of Viktor Matejka, Vienna City Councilor for Cultural Affairs, he devoted his energies to the reconstruction of Vienna in a number of public building projects.

The catalogue raisonné *Otto Rudolf Schatz* is the seventh volume in a series of works devoted to Austrian artists, made possible thanks to the sponsorship of the Dorotheum. It is published by the Belvedere Research Center in book form and as an online catalogue. The list of paintings in the print version is supplemented by a digital archive of drawings and graphic works, available in German and English on the Belvedere website. The digital version allows the catalogue to be continually updated and provides a comprehensive overview of Schatz's works, most of which are in private collections.

The Research Center is a unique platform for academic study with a focus on Austrian art. Monika Mayer and Stefan Lehner from the Neue Galerie Archive (ANG) have provided valuable documentary material on Schatz's exhibition activities at Otto Kallir-Nirenstein's Neue Galerie in Vienna. Éva Bajkay from the Magyar Nemzeti Galéria (Hungarian National Gallery) has been most supportive of the project research. Numerous museums, including the Wien Museum, Museum Moderner Kunst Würten in Passau, Leopold Museum, and the Art Collection and Archive of the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, have made visual material available.

The catalogue raisonné, which began as a research project in 2010, has been facilitated to a large extent through the kind support of private collections, such as the Daim collection, the Friends of the Hagenbund, the Hans Schmid Private Foundation, the Leopold Collection, the Pabst Collection, the Ortner Collection in Vienna, the Richard Grubman and Caroline Mortimer Collection in the USA, and many Viennese galleries. Above all, however, the project has been made possible through the initiative of Dietrich Kraft, who, in 2010, following on from the publications by Wilfried Daim, produced a provisional catalogue raisonné together with Matthias Boeckl, which provides the basis for this volume. Finally, I am most grateful to Cornelia Cabuk from the Belvedere Research Center, who was responsible for this project. The publication of this comprehensive catalogue is the result of her tireless, extensive, and in-depth research into the work of Otto Rudolf Schatz.

INTRODUCTION

DIETRICH KRAFT

OTTO RUDOLF SCHATZ— MISFIT AND REBEL

In 1918, the disaster of World War I left behind a truncated Austrian state that was shaken to its foundations. Daily life was overshadowed first by hunger, poverty, and disease, and later by extremist political conflict. It is therefore all the more surprising that Austria, and Vienna in particular, was able to produce such remarkable achievements in the fields of architecture, literature, music, philosophy, psychoanalysis, sociology, medicine, and natural sciences after 1918. The art of the time was popular among its contemporaries, but is now generally regarded as backward and imitative. But was it really so insignificant that it deserves to be forgotten? Otto Rudolf Schatz, who in the First Republic was a respected artist but has been generally ignored since 1945, serves as an example in responding to this question.

LIFE AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Schatz was born on January 18, 1900, into a middle-class civil servant's family. After attending various schools, he received excellent training at the Vienna School of Applied Arts. His eight months of military service left him disillusioned, and he remained a committed pacifist all his life. In 1919 he tried his hand at a number of different jobs, before feeling ready in 1920 to embark on a career as an independent artist. He was an excellent draftsman and quickly mastered all graphic techniques, watercolor, tempera, and oil painting, adeptly employing these media according to his chosen subject. Nor was he daunted by large formats, whether in oil, as a fresco, sgraffito, or mosaic—the latter being produced mainly for the City of Vienna.

Schatz had a gruff and explosive temperament, but also revealed a sensitive side, for example in his children's books and drawings for adolescents, and his assistance with the calligraphy studies of the thirteen-year-old son of the gallery owner Otto Kallir-Nirenstein. He was driven incessantly by his art and was happiest when working. From 1928 to 1938 he was a member of the Hagenbund and, like many of his colleagues, had good contacts with artists in other countries.

His numerous visits to and frequent participation in exhibitions in the cultural capitals of Europe are well documented, as is the presentation of international art in Vienna and Austria. Schatz was well informed about contemporary artistic developments. However, having swiftly moved on from the influence of Egon Schiele, he showed little interest in stylistic movements or luminaries of the art world, instead choosing to work in whichever manner best expressed his personal outlook on life, sometimes in different styles simultaneously. He was also quite clear about the distinction between works he made to earn money and those he created for the sake of art. In a letter to his long-standing friend Anton D., written in Prague on December 12, 1942, he mentions that he had just completed some pictures for sale but that at the weekend he would do some work for himself, since after all, it was important to create something “of enduring value.” To make a living and put food on the table he painted hackneyed tavern scenes and landscapes. When he was in severe financial straits, he also did pornographic pictures in large numbers, which always sold well. But even here the quality fluctuated depending on his mood and the respective client, ranging from primitive and vulgar to depictions of a powerful, unbounded eroticism.

From 1935 to 1937, Schatz traveled extensively throughout Europe and to the USA, together with his wife Vally, née Wittal. Vally came from a wealthy Jewish family in Brno. Because of Schatz’s outspoken anti-fascist sentiments and his wife’s Jewish origins, the couple fled the country when German troops entered Austria in March 1938. They went first to Brno and from there to Italy. When racial laws came into effect in Italy as well, they returned to Brno and eventually settled in Prague, probably at the start of World War II. In October 1944 Schatz was betrayed to the Gestapo, interned for sixteen days, and in November 1944 deported to a labor camp in Klettendorf (now Klecina) near Breslau (Wrocław). After the Russians had liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau, Schatz was moved via Gräditz (Grodziszczce) concentration camp to Bistritz bei Beneschau (Bystrice u Benešova), where he stayed until the end of the war in early May 1945, having been critically ill for the final six weeks of his internment. Back in Prague he was reunited with Vally, who had survived internment in Theresienstadt from February 1945. She filed for divorce in September of that year, however, and later emigrated to the USA. Schatz returned to Vienna in November 1945, taking what was left of his possessions and pictures. In the years that followed, he found champions in City Councilor Viktor Matejka and later in vice-mayor Hans Mandl and his old friend Erich Leischner, now a member of the Vienna senate, who provided him with commissions for the City of Vienna. He died of lung cancer on April 26, 1961.

A TENTATIVE EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF OTTO RUDOLF SCHATZ

Which aspects of the work of this artist have the most abiding impact on us and continue to capture our attention? O. R. Schatz was a master of woodcut. Many of his works in this technique, showing motifs from the world of work and industry, are rightly considered icons of working-class culture. His book illustrations deserve similar attention, particularly the Expressionist volume *Die Neue Stadt* – Ex 36566 – with Josef Luitpold Stern’s working class “psalm.” Having initially developed a style for landscapes, portraits, and nudes inspired by Schiele, Schatz’s large oil paintings from the years 1929/30 are probably among the

highpoints of his creative output. Painted in a New Objectivity style, one thing they all have in common is a sense of something mysterious and inexplicable. Three pictures may serve to illustrate this phenomenon.

In *Exposure* – M 1930 5, an African couple, the woman bare-breasted at the center of the picture, is presented by a white fairground showman. Superficially it seems like a motif intended for the benefit of male voyeurism, on closer inspection it reveals the crass contempt for humanity inherent in the showman's occupation. The psychologist Wilfried Daim, who rediscovered Schatz after 1945, regards this, rightly so in my opinion, as one of the most important paintings of the First Republic.

The painting *Moon Women* – M 1930 3 – is much more difficult to decode and has often been the object of fierce criticism. In my own personal interpretation, the two nude women are survivors in a desolate, post-apocalyptic world. Next to them Schatz has placed a broken Doric column, a phallic symbol and representation of a Europe destroyed by male hubris. He also used this metaphor in the monumental fresco *St. Christophorus* – M 1938 33, painted in Brno in 1939, as well as in other works. In the background are two straggly trees with just a few leaves, as relics of a lost world, and even the moon is partially concealed by a cloud. The women, however, have not given up; they stand upright and confident in their high heels, their gaze expressing determination and optimism. Perhaps they will save this world. At all events, Schatz always placed more trust in women than he did in men.

Balloon Seller – M 1931 1 – initially seems like a conventional depiction of the Prater. However, the two girls and the balloon seller are looking intently at someone or something seemingly important but out of our view. Could it be a seducer wanting to pay for the balloons, or are they witnessing an accident? Here, too, the inexplicable imperceptibly dominates the picture.

Schatz's trip to the USA resulted in several impressive works in different techniques, which are considered on a par with similar works by Wilhelm Thöny. From his time in Prague we have two poignant series of watercolors—*That was the Prater*, 1941, and *Zlata Praha* (Golden Prague), 1944—as well as the remarkable oil painting *Tavern in Czechia* – M 1942 9, and many works in watercolor/casein technique, particularly miniatures, which we should call “forbidden pictures” akin to those by Emile Nolde, another artist who, like Schatz, was banned from painting by the Nazis.

In the years after 1945, Schatz once more attained new heights as a visual recorder of the devastation wrought on Vienna by the war, but also of the city's rebuilding. His watercolors showing the brutality of the Nazi regime and the tragedy of the doomed Jews in Gräditz and other camps leave an indelible impression. Here Schatz achieved something truly remarkable.

Schatz's life and work are notable on account of his unswerving opposition to fascism of every kind and his unbridled passion for work. It is now up to us to judge his works in relation to those of other, more established artists of the interwar years, such as Wilhelm Thöny, Herbert Boeckl, Franz Sedlacek, and Rudolf Wacker, and to accord Schatz his due position in the history of art between 1918 and 1945.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Cornelia Cabuk for her meticulous and investigative approach and her wide-ranging knowledge of art history, which have made this comprehensive catalogue raisonné possible. Schatz collectors, galleries, auction houses, and museums alike should welcome this book with enthusiasm.

EXPLANATION OF NUMBERING SYSTEM

The printed catalogue raisonné of the paintings of Otto Rudolf Schatz is supplemented online by a catalogue of his drawings and graphic works. It is available on the Belvedere website as is the English version of the text. The “**Ex ...**” catalogue numbers refer to the online catalogue.

Website:

<https://werkverzeichnisse.belvedere.at/online>

The painting numbers are in the form
M [painting] **19..** [year] **number**

OTTO RUDOLF



SCHATZ

CORNELIA CABUK

LIFE AND WORK

INTRODUCTION

The work of Otto Rudolf Schatz (January 18, 1900 – Vienna – April 26, 1961) retains its fascination today not only on account of its manifest artistic merit in all its phases but also for its function as a reflection of the times. While being familiar with contemporary artistic trends, Schatz selected only those aspects of the various artistic movements that corresponded to his notion of art as an enlightening medium for social and humanistic education. In spite of serious setbacks, political persecution, and poverty—and often in conflict with the artistic and political mainstream—he managed to retain this independence right through to his later works. As such, he fitted the Social Democrat narrative of the “eternal rebel,”¹ while creating a personal and distinctively Viennese vocabulary as an artist within Central European Modernism at the interface of literature and art, Expressionism and constructive objectivity. He was one of a generation of artists who, traumatized by the atrocities of World War I, gave expression after the end of the Habsburg Empire to the social ideal of the “New (democratic) Man.” His œuvre is a further example of the continuation after World War I of the artistic flowering at the turn of the century through a concentration of intellectual forces in the former imperial capital, often in the form of subculture or as exile art. In fact, the art of the interwar years was of an impressive and hitherto underestimated quality and, in spite of the political and economic crises of the time, formed an essential component of Central European Modernism.

¹
Slama, *Memoriam*,
1978.

APOCALYPSE AND SOCIAL UTOPIA

NEW BEGINNING AFTER THE END OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE 1918–24

EDUCATION AND MILITARY SERVICE IN WORLD WAR I

Otto Rudolf Schatz grew up as the son of an Austrian civil servant in Vienna.² He was born on January 18, 1900, the third child of Emil Schatz, senior post office inspector living at Althanplatz 10 in Lichtental in the 9th district, a part of Vienna where sub-standard housing conditions were still prevalent in 1920.³ His elder brother Herbert Schatz died in the early 1920s of pulmonary tuberculosis, then also known as the “Viennese sickness,” which was still widespread at the time and was not effectively tackled until Julius Tandler’s health reforms. Both brothers came from a well-off bourgeois home. The family structure was strict and patriarchal, and corporal punishment by the despotic father was commonplace.

Between 1906 and 1914, Schatz attended elementary school and three years of public secondary school. Thereafter he had private painting lessons and sought, against his father’s will, to become an artist. The permanent conflict and rebellion against his father continued until the latter’s death during World War II.⁴ Schatz enrolled at the School of Applied Arts (Kunstgewerbeschule) on October 1, 1915, stating his desired career as a “painter of interiors,” anticipating the path he would eventually take after his first professional experiences.⁵ He studied during World War I from 1915 to 1918 and continued his training after an interruption during the 1918/19 academic year. He attended the General Form Theory class given by Oskar Strnad, who described him encouragingly as “hardworking with a good sense of form.” His progress in Ornamental Form Theory with Franz Cizek, Lettering and Heraldry with Rudolf Larisch, and Life Studies with Anton Kenner was described by these three professors as “commendable.”⁶ In 1916, the *Wiener Zeitung* wrote of the “students Rudolf Erler and Otto Schatz at the School of Applied Arts of the Imperial and Royal Austrian Museum for Art and Industry,” who received “an annual grant of 450 crowns from the Chamber of Trade and Commerce for the 1916/17 academic year.”⁷ Presumably his father did not support him in his training as an artist, because he received this amount in the 1917/18 academic year as well.⁸

He was obliged to interrupt his studies to perform military service in the second semester of the 1917/18 academic year, when Alfred Roller issued a certificate to give him the status of a one-year volunteer.⁹ This meant that after serving for one year, instead of the normal three, he could be promoted to the rank of

2
Basic information about his life and a “provisional catalogue of works” in Kraft/Boeckl, Schatz, 2010.

3
Since 1949: Julius-Tandler-Platz; for information on Tandler see Sablik, Tandler, 2010, p. 191; for biographical information about Schatz see k. k. Kunstgewerbeschule, Abgangszeugnis (leaving certificate) no. 674, January 29, 1919, archive of the University of Applied Arts, Vienna.

4
Letter from Otto Rudolf Schatz, December 5, 1943, Otto Rudolf Schatz estate, Vienna (hereinafter NLORS).

5
Abgangszeugnis (see n. 3).

6
Ibid.

7
Anon., Verhandlungen, 1916.

8
Anon., Verhandlungen, 1917.

9
Notes on the Abgangszeugnis (see n. 3).



Ex 33875

Lumberjack,
from the series *Wanderer*, 1919
Woodcut, Richard Grubman and
Caroline Mortimer Collection,
Cambridge, MA (USA)

“reserve lieutenant.” He completed his military training on February 28, 1918, and joined the 27th Imperial and Royal Military Police Battalion.¹⁰ This was stationed with the 30th Infantry Division, part of the Second Imperial and Royal Army, in Bessarabia in the area between Prut, the Dniester, and the Black Sea.¹¹ Having just passed the age of eighteen, he served, as he states himself, on the Ukrainian front, where heavy fighting still continued. Because of earlier pogroms in Tsarist Russia, the German and Jewish minorities living there had welcomed the revolution, with its guarantee of freedom and equality of all nations. In reality, the situation required Austro-Hungarian troops to remain in position even after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, with the result that “World War I in the East continued, both with arms and with the pen, even after 1918—in the form of territorial combat and wars of independence, the Russian civil war, ideological wars (defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic), and disputes about the interpretation of history.”¹² Some 250,000 troops were sent to Ukraine to implement the *Brotfrieden* (“bread peace”), as the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was called.¹³ To ensure peace with Russia, the Second Army marched through Bessarabia in late February 1918 in the direction of Odessa, where it remained stationed as the “Eastern Army.” Arthur Roessler reports that, following the collapse, Schatz, “who had long been thought dead or damaged, arrived home from Ukraine in December 1918, scruffy and lice-ridden, by a tortuous and roundabout route, successfully surmounting various obstacles along the way” – Ex 33869.¹⁴ He is certain to have been involved in bitter fighting during his military service and was wounded several times. It was not until the armistice on November 4 that the soldiers began to return home. The experience of the horrors of war in Ukraine made Schatz a lifelong pacifist.

Although Roller had already issued a certificate for 1917/18, Schatz applied in November 1918 for readmission to the General Department of the School of Applied Arts with his teacher Strnad. With Roller’s approval he was able to continue his studies in the 1918/19 winter semester on November 14, until the issuance of a leaving certificate on January 29, 1919.¹⁵ This was followed by irregular work as a gardener, house and sign painter, interior decorator, and last as a draftsman in a portal factory, and as a damask painter for the Czech embassy in Penzinger Strasse.¹⁶

¹⁰
Stellungslisten Wien, Sign. 395,
KA Grp 1, Ass. Protok. Eigene 1918,
War Archive, Austrian State
Archive, Vienna.

¹¹
My thanks to Dr. Gerhard Artl,
War Archive, Austrian State
Archive, Vienna.

¹²
Bachinger/Dornik, Schützen-
graben, 2013, p. 13.

¹³
Rauchensteiner, Doppeladler, 1993,
p. 543.

¹⁴
Roessler, Einiges, 1930, p. 69;
Schatz must already have been
back in Vienna by November 1918,
because he applied at this time
for readmission to the School of
Applied Arts.

¹⁵
Abgangszeugnis (see n. 9).

¹⁶
According to Arthur Roessler and
Viktor Matejka; Matejka, Künstler,
1947, n. p.; Roessler, Einiges, 1930,
p. 69.



The traumatic war experience and its effects on Schatz's personality, which he expressively and realistically depicted in a drawing in 1919 of a grenade attack – Ex 5715 ↑,¹⁷ were hinted at in a text about the artist by Erika Tietze-Conrat in 1923:

17
Exh. cat. Vienna, Wien Museum,
Schatz & Hauser, 2016, cat. 11,
p. 44 with ill.

18
Tietze-Conrat, Schatz, 1923, n. p.

“There can be no doubt that the city and the war years also left their mark on him. [...] In spite of the city experience, he remained down-to-earth, with a healthy desire and carefree cheerfulness—head wounds and weight loss notwithstanding. He was no doubt a little crazy, but no more than a creative human being needs to be [...].¹⁸

VIENNA AS PLATFORM OF MODERNIST CENTRAL EUROPE — FREIE BEWEGUNG — MAX HEVESI SALON

19
See photos of agitation platoons,
exh. cat. Chicago, Art Institute,
Revolutsiia!, 2017, p. 23, figs. 2, 3.

20
Bachinger/Dornik, Schützengra-
ben, 2013, p. 206.

21
Ibid.

22
Ibid.

Schatz's debut in the Vienna art scene did not take place in the normal fashion through a show at the Secession or an established gallery, but in an exhibition to mark the founding of a new gallery, together with artists of various origins stranded in Vienna, all representatives of Central European Modernism and former citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In a discursive atmosphere of artistic exchange, they contributed to the vibrant creativity of the Vienna scene. As a result, Schatz's artistic language from the outset was also that of an international community of artists.

After World War I and the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, intellectual forces of renewal, enthusiastic about the idea of social utopias, gathered in Vienna. Young participants in the war had had personal experience on the Eastern front of the Russian Revolution and the transformation of the Tsarist



Ex 5715

In the Jaws of War, 1918

Watercolor on paper, private collection

Ex 41475

Max Hevesi (?), c. 1921

Pencil on paper, private collection

Ex 35035

Béla Uitz, *Self-Portrait*, 1921

Etching, private collection

23

See Cabuk, Hauser,
2012, p. 20–25.

24

Max (Sándor or Miksa) Hevesi,
1884–1948.

25

G. G., Theater, 1920;
advertisement 1920.

26

Schweiger, Werner J.: *Kunst-
handel der Moderne, Max Hevesi*;
Berlinische Galerie, Sammlung
Online, <http://sammlung-online.berlinischegalerie.de/e/MuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=231875&viewType=detailView>
[accessed on January 1, 2018].

27

In Otto Kallir's 1966 catalogue
raisonné erroneously listed as
“Havesi”; see Kallir, Schiele,
1966, WV 129.

28

Josef Kalmer, real name Josef
Kalmus 1898–1959; Reinecke,
Karl F. Kocmata, 1994, p. 108;
for information about his life, see
Gausterer, Kalmer, 2004; Hall,
Murray G., *Österreichische
Verlagsgeschichte*, http://verlagsgeschichte.murrayhall.com/?page_id=284#Heading11
[accessed on March 22, 2017].

29

He spoke twenty-seven languages,
see Gausterer, Kalmer, p. 38.

monarchy into a soviet republic. Russian revolutionaries mobilized an efficient and extensive propaganda machinery and sent propaganda units to all provinces.¹⁹ Through agitation trips by Internationalists,²⁰ knowledge of the new Soviet Republic was also spread among Austro-Hungarian soldiers serving on the Eastern front, for example in Bukovina, who often enthusiastically adopted the new ideas, especially that of pacifism. Many Hungarian prisoners of war in particular joined Red Army formations.²¹ These ideas were countered by a “‘defense mechanism’ established by the Ministry of War in the service of ‘fighting Communism,’ extending ‘from the most easterly control points to the hinterland of the Danube Monarchy,’”²² but, after being stationed in Ukraine, Schatz returned from the Eastern front as a pacifist, as did Carry Hauser following his experiences in Czernowitz (Chernivtsi). In Vienna, Schatz joined the young international avant-garde, a source of decisive artistic stimuli.²³

In 1921 he first met Max Hevesi,²⁴ originally from Budapest, who had opened an art salon at Mariahilferstrasse 13 in Vienna in early 1921 and ran a graphic art publishing business. He was barely older than Schatz, who drew a portrait at the time, probably of Hevesi, on the gallery’s stationery – c. 1921, **Ex 41475** ↗. The striking and precise character study recalls portrait studies by Lajos Tihanyi, who had exhibited at the Moderne Galerie, Kunst und Wohnen Lorenz in April 1920.²⁵ The drawing clearly illustrates that Schatz was already open to Modernist trends in contemporary art and was trying them out with great panache and skill. From 1924, Galerie Max Hevesi was located at Habsburgergasse 5 in the 1st district,²⁶ specializing in Austrian and Hungarian contemporary art. Hevesi collected the works of Egon Schiele and owned his painting *Self-Seer II*.²⁷ He published illustrations by Schatz, Béla Uitz – **Ex 35035** ↑, Robert Philippi, Alois Leopold Seibold, Viktor Tischler, Bartholomäus Stefferl, and others, and in fall 1921 was co-editor with the author Josef Kalmer²⁸ of the last two issues, nos. 34 and 35, of the magazine *Ver: Monatsschrift für Kunst und Literatur*. Kalmer was from Galicia and came from Czernowitz to Vienna as a young man, before World War I. A translator, writer, and former citizen of the multinational state of Austria-Hungary, he was at the interface of literature and art, and his knowledge of languages²⁹ made him a key figure among the young generation of the international avant-garde in Vienna after the end of the Habsburg Monarchy.

Ex 41700
Béla Uitz
Emberiség / Humanity, 1920
Fresco cartoon,
whereabouts unknown



Ex 6283
Carry Hauser
The Wooded, 1919
Oil on wood,
private collection



He had fought as a one-year volunteer on the Eastern front near Olyka in 1916 and witnessed “both the February and the October Revolution at the front.”³⁰ Thanks to his experience, he became the contact person for the revolutionary soldiers’ committee and company commander of the Red Guard in Vienna. He joined the Austrian soviet movement during its revolutionary period from 1917 to 1920 and was friends with Egon Erwin Kisch. He wrote and translated pacifist poems for Franz Pfemfert’s magazine *Aktion* and was in contact with Ivan Goll and Rolf Henkl, who, like Hauser, was a member of the Freie Bewegung artists’ association, which organized a solo exhibition of Uitz’s works on its premises in winter 1920 – Ex 41700 ↑.³¹ Uitz was an activist for the Hungarian Soviet Republic in Budapest and, with his brother-in-law Lajos Kassák, was a member of the Hungarian avant-garde living in exile in Vienna, following the banning in June 1919 of the magazine *MA* edited by Kassák in Budapest. From May 1920, *MA* was published in Vienna under Kassák’s aegis and, in parallel with an event and exhibition program, served as a platform for progressive international contemporary art. In 1921, following a Dadaist phase, Kassák developed a specific form of Constructivism, dubbed “pictorial architecture,” as an expression of a revolutionary lifestyle depicted through art and inspired by the geometric-abstract trends in the international avant-garde and De Stijl. Uitz, meanwhile, placed his art in the service of the proletarian revolution. He was directly influenced by Russian Constructivism, which he had discovered and adapted for himself during a visit to Moscow in January 1921. There is sparse information about Schatz at this time, but it can well be imagined that, with his negative attitude to the bourgeois concept of “artistic endeavor” (*Kunstschaffen*), he allied with the Constructivists when he said: “There is no art, only work; there are no works of art, only work achievements (*Werkleistungen*) [...]”³² Roessler, who met him at around that time, described him as an “anti-academic, anti-aesthete, anti-artist.”³³ Schatz’s attitude to art mirrored one of the aims of the avant-garde, namely the incorporation of art in daily life. Throughout his life, style questions were irrelevant to him: he dealt directly with reality.

The Freie Bewegung artists’ association promoted by Adolf Loos was founded at Kärtnerstrasse 4 in 1918. In 1919 it had already shaken up the young artist community with the Johannes Itten solo exhibition and established itself

30
Kalmer, Josef:
“Erinnerung an Olyk,”
quoted in *ibid.*, p. 9.

31
Ibid., p. 43; Schneider, *Bewegung*,
1999, p. 102–18.

32
Quoted in Roessler, *Einiges*,
1930, p. 63.

33
Ibid.



Ex 41277
Rivals, 1921
 Woodcut,
 Private collection

34
 Cabuk, Hauser, 2012, p. 36.

35
 Ibid., p. 62.

36
 Kassák, Uitz, 1920.

37
 Ankiewicz-Kleehoven,
 Kunstaussstellungen, 1920.

38
 Kassák, Uitz 1920, p. 9.

39
 See Johannes Itten, *Der rote Turm*,
 1917/18, mumok, B687.

40
 Johannes Itten, *Frau Agathe und
 allen meinen Schülern*, portfolio
 with ten lithographs, mumok,
 Dieter and Gertraud Bogner
 collection, MG 514.

41
 Kassák, Máglyák, 1920.

42
 Éva Bajkay in exh. cat. Brussels,
 Europolia, Avant-Garde, 1999,
 p. 28.

43
 Event poster,
 Kassák Museum, Budapest.

immediately after the war with an international avant-garde program and protagonists from the countries of the former Monarchy.³⁴ Hauser, five years older than Schatz and a fellow student at the School of Applied Arts, was a founder member of the Freie Bewegung and instrumental in opening it up to new ideas such as Czech Cubism – Ex 6283. Kalmer worked at the Verlag der Wiener Graphische Werkstätte on the publication *Bibliothek für die Internationale des Geistes Phalanx*, for which Hauser designed the covers.³⁵ In the tenth MA catalogue in November 1920, Kassák devoted a four-page review with two full-page illustrations to the works of his brother-in-law Uitz.³⁶ In the *Wiener Zeitung*, Hans Ankiewicz-Kleehoven mentioned Uitz's striving for “cosmic individuality” and paid tribute to his art as a document of its time.³⁷ As the painting illustrated in MA clearly demonstrates,³⁸ Uitz's works in the Freie Bewegung were strongly influenced by Itten.³⁹ Before going to the Bauhaus in 1919, Itten, who had run a private art school in Vienna from 1916 to 1919, dedicated a portfolio with ten lithographs to his students. The cosmic-expressive dimension of the mountain landscape⁴⁰ on one of its sheets evokes a woodcut series by Schatz from the years 1919/20, published in 1923 by Thyrsos Verlag with a foreword by Erica Tietze-Conrat – Ex 39405. It is likely that Schatz, as a younger colleague of Hauser, was familiar with the Freie Bewegung exhibitions and with MA. The same volume 1 from 1920 also contained a linocut by János Máttyás Teutsch,⁴¹ which influenced Schatz's woodcuts *Rivals*, 1921 – Ex 41277 ↑ and *Lurking Man*, 1921 – Ex 41704. Figurative abstraction as an outflow of the power of the cosmos, which formed the anthroposophical background to Teutsch's illustrations,⁴² appealed to him at the time, for its connection with the culture of vagabondage.

Apart from *Ver*, Kalmer also worked as a writer and translator for the magazines *Aufschwung*, *Neue Erde*, *Die Wage*, among others, and from 1921 to 1925 for MA. In 1926 he collaborated with Jolan Kassák and others in organizing the MA event “Constructive Art / Résumé 1925/26 of the Activist Artists' Group in the Schwarzwaldsaal on Herrengasse in Vienna.”⁴³ In the 34th issue of *Ver* in 1921, he and Hevesi described the program of an international European basis of culture:

Ex 40095
Factory in a Landscape, 1922
 Printer's ink and pencil on paper,
 Private collection



“This magazine is intended [...] to play a mediating role between a misunderstood generation in Vienna of young—not always in terms of age but always in terms of spirit—painters and writers [...]. It is not a local matter. The basis is Europe, and its artistic characteristics are [...] the point of reference [...]. We will confine ourselves to culture, a wide-ranging field!”⁴⁴

Hevesi published a graphic series by Uitz, the portfolio *Versuche* (Endeavors) with eight etchings, and showed much of his oeuvre, including works on paper in paint and ink, which inspired Schatz's early efforts, at the magazine's Vienna exhibition venue. The dynamic interaction of man and nature, with new technological achievements in the form of a factory and a chimney rising up into the sky in a Cubist-Expressionist pictorial language, was a leitmotif of the Modernists and a recurrent theme in the work of both artists, for example, in the sheet *Factory in a Landscape*, 1922 – Ex 40095 ↑, in which Schatz used a more lyrical and expressive pictorial language than Uitz.⁴⁵ Uitz presented the 1920 painting *Emberiség/Mankind* at the Freie Bewegung exhibition, where he exhibited together with the German Expressionist Erich Heckel.⁴⁶ The visualization of a utopia in this work from the period directly after World War I in a highly modern, activist, Cubist-Expressionist style impressed the young generation of artists, which included both Schatz and, for example, Hauser from the Freie Bewegung association. A copy of *Emberiség* was published in Uitz's magazine *Egység/Einheit* in 1922.⁴⁷ It was a fresco cartoon originally intended for the council room of the House of Labor in Budapest as an ideological memorial to the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁴⁸ The evolutionary narrative focused on the redemption of mankind through the “New Man.” At its center were love, a couple, motherhood. Uitz's holistic, eschatological viewpoint included on the left a depiction of combat, murder, and manslaughter, and on the opposite side depictions of work and reconstruction. Possibly as a historical reference to the mass migrations after World War I, at the bottom is a procession of people in flight. Uitz's message and his painterly and probably intensively colored design must have made an enormous impression on the war generation of artists, who had seen the flow of refugees for themselves. Certain themes, such as the depiction of work and

⁴⁴
 Hevesi, *Programmatisch*, 1921, p. 1.

⁴⁵
 See Bajkay, Uitz, 1987, no. 296, ill. p. 146. Thanks to Éva Bajkay for numerous indications.

⁴⁶
 Bajkay, Uitz, 1987, WV 305.

⁴⁷
 Ibid.

⁴⁸
 Deréky, *Avantgarde-Dichtung*, 1990.



Ex 32886

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1921
Pencil on paper, whereabouts unknown

Ex 41545

Rest with Traveling Minstrel, Hiking and Sketchbook, 1920/21
Pen in Indian ink on paper, private collection

reconstruction, are also to be found in Schatz's later paintings and drawings. Uitz's painting was sold at the Freie Bewegung exhibition and its whereabouts are unknown.⁴⁹

Hevesi signed Schatz under contract in fall 1921 and showed his works, paintings, watercolors, and graphic works, including a portfolio *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (The Book of Revelation), 1921 – Ex 32886 ↑ together with works by Béla Kádár and Hugo Scheiber, before the two Hungarians moved to Herwarth Walden's Galerie Sturm in Berlin.⁵⁰ A reviewer described Schatz as an “illustrator of unusual qualities,”⁵¹ mentioning in particular the twenty-one-year-old's skillful graphite drawings and the astonishing richness of form, suggestive of an overflowing imagination. In 1923, Fritz Karpfen published a sheet from the series in a volume on contemporary art in the series *Österreichische Kunst*.⁵²

Scheiber had grown up in Vienna, where his father was a sign painter in the Prater.⁵³ He studied from 1898 to 1900 at the School of Applied Arts in Budapest. Schatz mentions Kádár and Scheiber in his 1921 diaries:

“Met Kadar x / a dignified man / made crazy by hunger x /
a propertyless man who remained without possessions all his
life / some forty years x / and now with a / few pictures acts like
a man of / property x / and you can really see how / he is afraid
that / he may still lose / the possessions he has acquired /
x perhaps with some difficulty x / because he believes he must
pretend and / like the ‘masters of life and the // world’ be blasé
about the / possessions he owns x / how he wants to / sample
wealth x / And yet it is touching / how the man wallows in the
past x / His friend is Scheiber x / a fat patron full of / good wine
x / and with a three-story high chin x xx / but so jolly and full of
humor x / a man from whom one / can learn to drink x .”⁵⁴

49

Thanks to Éva Bajkay, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria (Hungarian National Gallery), for helpful information and pictures.

50

Anon., “Kunstausstellung,” 1921, newspaper review, archive of Magyar Nemzeti Galéria (Hungarian National Gallery).

51

Ibid.

52

Karpfen, *Gegenwartskunst*, 1923, p. 181.

53

Hugo Scheiber, *Autobiografie* (manuscript in Magyar Nemzeti Galéria), in exh. cat. Kassel, Neue Galerie, Wechsel-Wirkungen, 1986, p. 127.

54

Schatz, *Kurzbetrachtungen*, 1921. Thanks to Evelyn Polt-Heinzl for the typescript of her conference paper 2015: Polt-Heinzl, Schatz, 2015.

WORLD OF VAGABONDAGE

Cultural vagabondage during World War I furthered the international dissemination of anarchist, social-utopian, and pacifist ideas, which were directly espoused by many writers and visual artists.⁵⁵ Erich Mühsam, an activist in the 1919 Munich Soviet Republic, wrote as early as 1906 in *Die Fackel*: “Criminals, tramps, whores, and artists—that is the Bohemia that is pointing the way to a new culture.”⁵⁶ After the disaster of the war, “vagabonds and tramps” were also welcome guests of the Dadaists in Richard Huelsenbeck’s Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich.⁵⁷ Although there are few precise travel descriptions by Schatz, a worn travel journal and sketch-book from around 1920/21 provides useful information – Ex 41545 ←. It contains drawings from his trips: in the mountains, by a river, with like-minded friends. It can be assumed, however, that he came into contact with the culture of vagabondage much earlier, because Roessler writes that he returned from Ukraine “scruffy [...] by a tortuous and roundabout route.”⁵⁸ Although he lived permanently in Vienna, his pictures show that, well into the 1930s, he recognized the importance of roving as a mobile lifestyle. Roessler writes that Schatz liked to seek “the wide-open countryside [...] because of the possibility of unobstructed horizontal and vertical freedom of movement in an unending natural environment.”⁵⁹ Many of the themes of his paintings, for example *People in the Forest*, c. 1922 – Ex 5343 → and *Wandering Journeyman*, 1924 – Ex 5720 → describe nature as a living environment and expression of peaceful coexistence. Even the series of landscape miniatures from the late 1930s, when he was already banned from working, reflects the exposed world and marginal existence of the vagabond – Ex 5719 →. Thus, vagabondage played an important role in his early works as an inspiration and way of life. Many of the subjects of his drawings tell of life with no fixed abode, and the politically inspired motifs of restlessness and vagabondage may be regarded as autobiographical.⁶⁰

This vagabondage is discernible in his diary jottings. In 1921 Schatz wrote:

“This is how I want to live, walking / in a storm x / traveling with the storm / in my heart x far far away x [...]”⁶¹ “Once we were many x now we are all scattered x”⁶² “x autumn walks / falling leaves and storm, wind and pouring rain up to my calves in autumn leaves x / downhill x on and on / and into the valley shrouded in mist x / cold and damp x and the lights shine / so warmly from the houses and in the wind you can howl / like the storm and go wild swirling up everything x / Musty darkness all around x / and the roads pale gray through / the forest [...] One more month and I’m away [+] through the forest x through the fields all the way to the mountains x.”⁶³

The style used by Schatz in these personal jottings was possibly inspired by the poems of the exiled Hungarians around Lajos Kassák. In the magazine *Ver* published by Hevesi, a review appeared in 1921 about a volume of poetry by the Hungarian Ady Endre/Andreas Ady, *In neuen Gewässern*, published by E. P. Tal & Co in Vienna, in which the Kassák group are mentioned as “seekers.”⁶⁴ Kassák, meanwhile, described his wanderings from Budapest to Paris in the 1909 poem *The Horse Dies and the Birds Fly Away*⁶⁵ using an impersonal, montage-like technique. A characteristic feature was the stream of isolated impressions in a

55

See Walter Fähnders, “Zwischen Vagabondage und Avantgarde: Hugo Sonnenschein, Emil Szittyá und andere,” in Kucher, *Moderne*, 2016, pp. 219–36.

56

Mühsam, “Bohème,” 1906, p. 10; see Fähnders, *Vagabondage*, 2016, p. 219.

57

Ibid.

58

Roessler, *Einiges*, 1930, p. 69.

59

Ibid., p. 63.

60

See Fähnders, *Vagabondage*, 2016, p. 219.

61

Schatz, *Kurzbetrachtungen*, 1921, bk. 1, p. 10.

62

Ibid., bk. 1, p. 2.

63

Ibid., bk. 1, p. 5.

64

Pusztai, Andreas Ady, 1921, pp. 24–25.

65

See Derék, *Avantgarde-Dichtung*, 1990; illustration, <http://tudasbazis.sulinet.hu/hu/magyar-nyelv-es-irodalom/irodalom/irodalom-12-osztaly/kassak-lajos/kassak-lajos-a-lo-meghal-a-madarak-kiropulnek-a-vers-ertelmezesei-lehetosegei> [accessed on July 19, 2017].

Ex 5343

People in the Forest, c. 1922
Gouache and pencil on paper,
Private collection

Ex 5720

Wandering Journeyman, 1924
Watercolor on paper,
private collection

Ex 5719

Figures Moving in a Landscape, 1920
Watercolor,
courtesy of Kunsthandel Widder,
Vienna



Ex 33868

Storm, from the series *Wanderer*, 1920
Woodcut,
Richard Grubman and
Caroline Mortimer Collection,
Cambridge, MA (USA)

Ex 33869

At the Campfire,
from the series *Wanderer*, 1919
Woodcut,
Richard Grubman and
Caroline Mortimer Collection,
Cambridge, MA (USA)

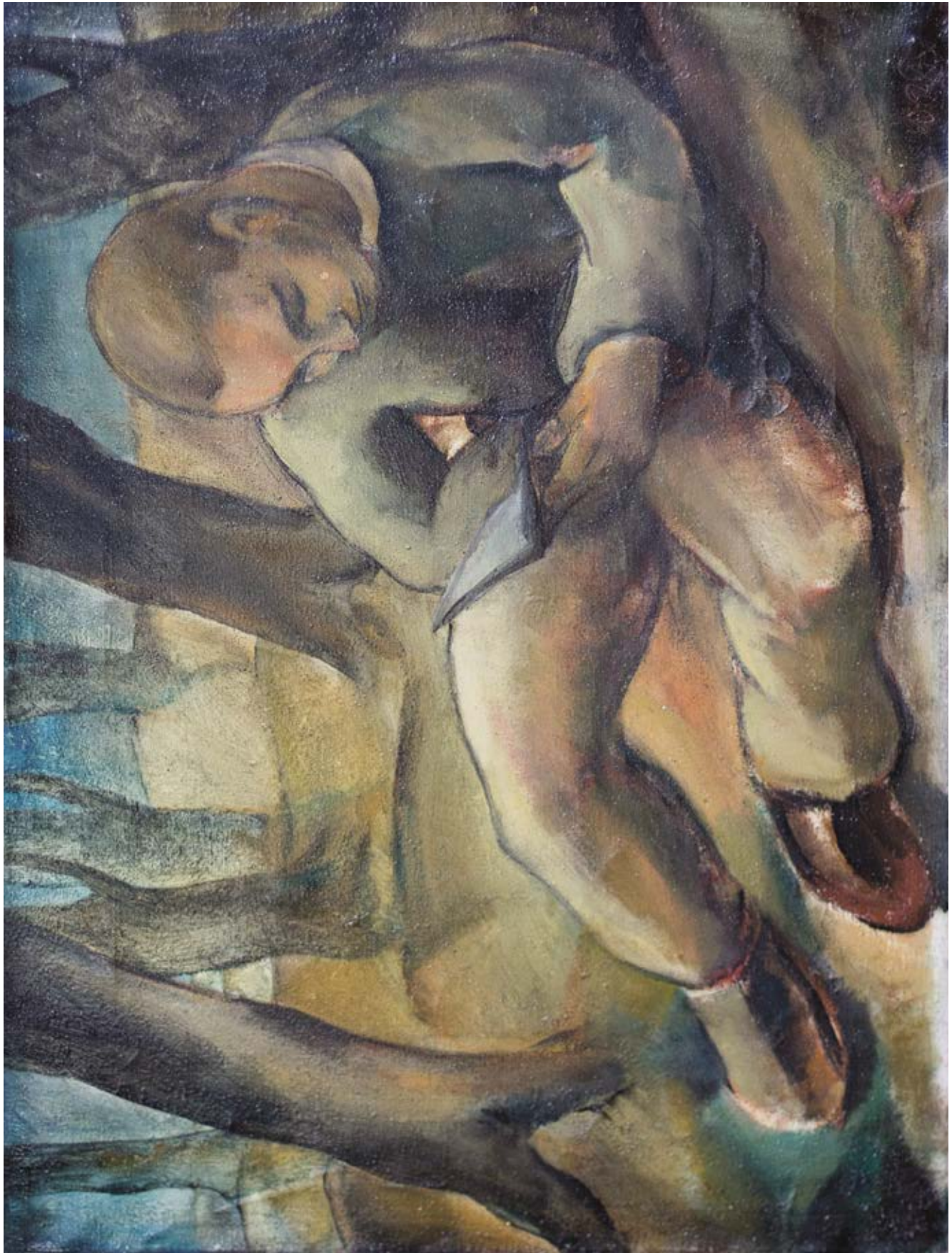
“montage of reality fragments”⁶⁶ separated by stars. This poem was published in Vienna for the first time in Kassák’s magazine 2×2 in 1922.⁶⁷ The rhythm of the sentences mirrors the rhythm of walking and to that extent appealed personally to Schatz, who used the basic narrative method of fragments separated by a cross or star, reminiscent of military intelligence messages, later also in his signature, which throughout his entire life was frequently supplemented by one or two crosses.

A review in the magazine *Ver* in 1921 of Schatz’s first exhibition at Hevesi’s gallery mentions the 1920 graphic sequence *Wanderer*.⁶⁸ In this highly expressive large-format woodcut series, figures and landscape build a formal unit and, exposed to wind, weather, and the forces of the cosmos, become a metaphor for the vagabond’s existential freedom – Ex 13568, Ex 17624, Ex 33868 ↑, Ex 33869 ↑, Ex 33870, Ex 33871, Ex 33872, Ex 33873, Ex 33874, Ex 33875. Apart from the twenty-one-year-old’s

⁶⁶ Deréky, *Avantgarde-Dichtung*, 1990, p. 56.

⁶⁷ Kassák, *Pferd*, 1922

⁶⁸ N, “Graphiker,” 1921.





Ex 33460

Trees, 1923
 Printer's ink on paper,
 Private collection

Ex 40606

The Miracle, 1920
 Woodcut, private collection

authentic experience of life, these sheets also contain a reflection and realistic reinterpretation of the metaphysical, figurative abstractions of Teutsch. Schatz also came into contact at this time with translations by Kalmer of texts by Arthur Rimbaud, whose poems are in many respects reflections on life on the road.⁶⁹ Issue 34 of *Ver* contained extracts from Rimbaud's *Illuminations*, a collection of prose poems compiled by his friend Paul Verlaine. In his preface to Rimbaud, translated by Kalmer in the 35th issue of *Ver*, the French writer Paul Claudel described Rimbaud as a "seer," who in an "alchemy of words" established the methodology of a "new art" as "transformation" and "emotional uncluttering of the elements of this world."⁷⁰ He quoted Rimbaud: "Real life is absent. We are not in the world."⁷¹ In this, Claudel recognized Rimbaud's "need to escape, which gripped him until his death," in order to find "the place and formula,' and to regain the 'Eden' of our original condition as 'sons of the sun.'" He said: "In the morning, when an individual and his memories are not yet awake at the same time, or while walking all day on the road, the connection between the soul and the body, which is subject to its rhythmic vibrations, dissolves. A kind of 'open' hypnosis occurs, an extremely rare condition of pure receptiveness."⁷² A similar search for expanded consciousness explains the subject matter of Schatz's drawings, most of which reflect situations during his vagabondage; for example, the recurrent reduction to the point of abstraction of backlit trees – Ex 5787, Ex 33460 ↑ which may be understood as metaphors for existence. The woodcut *The Miracle*, 1921 – Ex 40606 ↑⁷³ illustrated Rimbaud's text *Enfance* (Childhood) in *Ver* issue 34. It shows a couple in a landscape with a comet. The mood reflects the existential vulnerability of the figures in Rimbaud's poem as perceived by the Expressionist. In this context, Schatz's early paintings, such as *Man Reading in the Forest*, 1921 – M 1921 7 ←, offer an authentic testimony to "alternative" ways of life.⁷⁴ The wanderer, leaning directly on the forest floor, appears through his reading to transcend the world around him.

Ver also published the writings of another vagabond poet, Hugo Sonnenschein alias Sonka, who also lived for a time in Vienna.⁷⁵ Years later, in 1929, Schatz completed a woodcut series to illustrate *Vagabunden*, a collection of short stories by the prototypical vagabond Jack London, published by Strom Verlag – Ex 32025 →.⁷⁶ The stories convincingly describe the adventures and marginal

69
 Rimbaud, *Illuminations*, 1921.

70
 Claudel, Rimbaud, 1921.

71
 Ibid.

72
 Ibid.

73
Ver, year 5, no. 34, 1921.

74
 Ibid.

75
 Sonnenschein, "Ritter," 1921.

76
 See p. 72



M 1922 5

Gasometer, 1922
Oil on board,
Museum Moderner
Kunst Wörlen Passau

Ex 32025

Fleeing Man, Jack London,
Vagabonds, 1929
Woodcut, Literaturhaus Wien –
Dokumentationsstelle für neuere
Österreichische Literatur

M 1921 6

Landscape, 1921
Oil on wood,
Private collection



existence of the vagabond, which were faithfully reflected in Schatz's realistic illustrations – M 1921 6 ↑. Using a New Objectivity vocabulary, he placed London's stories in the setting of the years of political crisis, making the work today one of the most interesting graphic reproductions of 1920s Austria.

Hevesi's opening exhibition presented works by Schatz, Uitz, Erich Lamm, and Lilly Steiner. The inspiration for the early graphic work came from the writings of Rimbaud, as mentioned earlier, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Gustave Flaubert. Rimbaud's poem *Mouvement*, published in the 35th issue of *Ver*,⁷⁷ fitted in well with the Vienna art scene, which, influenced by Itten, reflected international Modernism via the Vienna avant-garde in the *Bewegung* (later *Freie Bewegung*) artists' association. The subculture of the road and the vagabond was also a feature of Rimbaud's poems:

"I'm the traveler on the high road through the stunted woods: the roar of the sluices drowns out my steps. I watch for hours the melancholy golden wash of the sunset. / I might well be the child left on the jetty washed to the open sea, the little farm-boy following the lane whose crest touches the sky. / The paths are rough. The little hills are covered with broom. The air is motionless. How far away the birds and the fountains are! That can only be the world's end ahead."⁷⁸

The "life reform" movement and its search for intensity soon gave rise to political activism. In 1919, Sándor Barta wrote in the ode *Primitive Dreifaltigkeit* (Primitive Trinity):

"They all, all stand in the morning light / and the morning light spreads sparkling across the entire horizon / the horizon clothes itself in mountains / the mountains in turn reach as far as the cities / and above the cities on columns a roof of smoke / of smoke of sulfur and heat."

The ode was considered one of the main works of the "Neue Dichtung" (New Poetry), and some of Schatz's watercolors with backlit sunrises exactly reflect this

77
Rimbaud, *Mouvement*, 1921.

78
Rimbaud, *Illuminations*, 1921, p. 9,
English translation:
http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/French/Rimbaud2.htm#anchor_Toc202067645.

Ex 40300
Summer Night, 1919
 Woodcut, private collection

Ex 41710
 Woodcut for Johannes von Saaz's
Der Ackermann und der Tod, 1922
 Book, private collection



imaginary world – Ex 5720, Ex 39439, Ex 33460.⁷⁹ In 1919, Sándor Bortnyik painted *Red Factory* using avant-garde vocabulary, while in a similar vein Schatz chose *Gasometer* as a heroic metaphor for technological progress, placing it in an explosively and expressively colored landscape setting – M 1922 5 ← ←.

Schatz worked in 1920 as an illustrator for Thyrsos Verlag,⁸⁰ which published not only literary works by E. T. A. Hoffmann and Nikolai Gogol and studies on art, eroticism, and morals⁸¹ by Fritz Karpfen and on Viennese ceramics by Leopold Wolfgang Rochowanski,⁸² but also portfolios of illustrations by Schatz. Rochowanski became director of the publishing company in 1923/24. Karpfen and Hermann Bahr also wrote for the company.⁸³

In 1921, Schatz, together with Uitz, Philippi, Tischler, and others, participated in Hevesi's *Second Fall Exhibition*. The review of his early work appeared in the October 1921 issue of *Ver*:

“The chaotic, fermenting, revolutionary nature of these days is fully reflected in the graphic works of Otto Robert [sic] Schatz, whose quality gives indication of a promising future purely as a painter. [...] In representing the ‘graphic idea,’ he never loses himself so much in details that he creates a confusing impression, but always keeps the bigger picture in mind, resulting in a natural and self-evident kind of harmony that only occasionally stands in strange (though not disruptive) contrast to the wild emotion of his thematic idea. All of his work to date has been imbued with a highly individual rhythm. Moreover, rhythm as an end in itself is also present and leads to the assumption that the seeker has paid attention to Itten and has benefited from his teaching. Schatz appears to have given most of himself in the twelve woodcuts recently published by Max Hevesi in Vienna. There is plenty more of him to be seen there as well: single sheets and cycles, in black or colored chalk; the sheets for Rilke’s ‘Weise von Liebe und Tod’ (powerful to the point of brutality), Flaubert’s ‘Légende de Saint Julien l’Hospitalier,’ Büchner’s ‘Dantons Tod’ (full of terror with screaming colors), and the ‘Wanderer’ sequence” – Ex 40300 ↖.⁸⁴

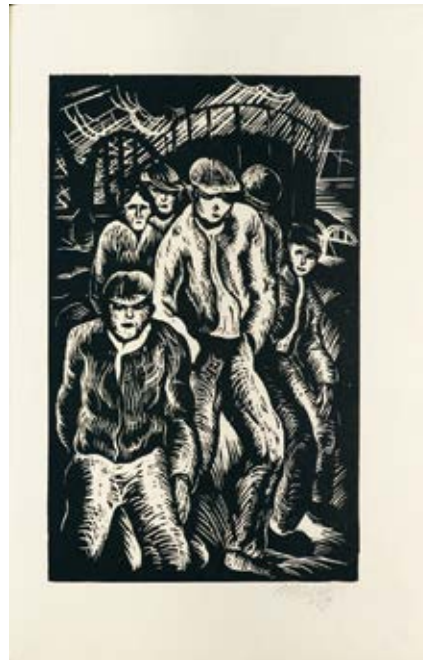
79
 Deréky, *Avantgarde-Dichtung*,
 1991, p. 54.

80
 Questionnaire of the Österreich-
 isches Künstlerlexikon by
 Hans Ankewicz von Kleehoven 1947,
 Künstlerarchiv, Research Center,
 Belvedere.

81
 Karpfen, *Kunst*, 1924.

82
 Rochowansky, *Keramik*, 1923.

83
 Bahr, *Handzeichnungen*, 1922.



M 1921 9
Encounter with Death,
 c. 1921
 Tempera grassa and
 pencil on wood,
 Private collection

Ex 41709
 Woodcut for Arthur Roessler's
Die Stimmung der Gotik, 1922
 Book, private collection



Ex 41063
 Chalk lithograph for
 Christian Morgenstern's
Galgenlieder, 1922
 Private collection

Ex 22002
Seated Female Nude, 1922
 Tempera grassa, gouache
 and pencil on paper,
 Private collection

84
 N, "Graphiker," 1921, p. 23.

85
 Roessler, *Kunstaussstellungen*,
 1921b, p. 5.

Toward the end of the year, Schatz started to collaborate with the writer and Schiele patron Roessler, who worked as an art critic for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. Roessler would have come across Schatz's work at the Donauländische Künstler exhibition at the Theseustempel in the Vienna Volksgarten in November.⁸⁵ By 1922, Schatz was already working on book projects for Roessler's Avalun Verlag. He completed woodcut illustrations for Johannes von Saaz's *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* (thirteen woodcuts; Ex 41710 ♣) and also did a painting of the subject – M 1921 9 ↑. He provided twenty woodcuts to the Avalun Verlag as illustrations for *Die Stimmung der Gotik* – Ex 41709 ↑ and for the unpublished book *Ein Altdeutsches Weihnachtsspiel* – Ex 13594. The successful productions of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*, staged by Max Reinhardt from 1920 at the Salzburg Festival,



M 19231

Sermon, 1923
Oil on board,
Wien Museum

Ex 5945

Suburban Houses, c. 1923
Watercolor and
pencil on paper,
Private collection

Ex 38991

*Reclining Nude with
Blue Cloth*, 1922
Tempera grassa and
charcoal on paper,
Private collection



86

The manuscripts were originally bound in a horseshoe—actually metal plates shaped like an executioner's ax. They can be found today in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, URL: http://www.dla-marbach.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Pressebereich/Pressefotos/2015/Neues_Literaturvermittlungsprogramm/1902_Morgenstern.jpg [accessed on January 2, 2018].

87

Letter from Arthur Roessler to G. Ph. Wörlen, Vienna, December 23/29, 1922, Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Wörlen, Passau. Thanks to Bianca Buhr from the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Wörlen Passau for transcribing the letters.

88

Ibid.

89

Ibid.

90

Anon., "Verschiedenes," s. 1922.

91

Exh. cat. Vienna, Belvedere, Hagenbund, 2014, p. 190.

92

Ibid., n. 1.

93

Markowitz, *Kunstschau*, 1925.

94

Questionnaire 1947 (see n. 80).

offered further inspiration for historical subjects as themes for popular plays. A similar trend became evident in Schatz's paintings, for example in *Sermon* – M 19231 ←, which shows scenes from popular Viennese life in the style of the Old Masters, in particular Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

In 1923, Schatz participated in the winter exhibition of the Vienna Secession. His contribution included the enigmatic and inspired series on Christian Morgenstern's *Galgenlieder* – Ex 41063 ←←. Schatz's chalk lithographs provide a multitude of visual fantasies to accompany Morgenstern's linguistically experimental and anarchic humor. The title page reprises the horseshoe shape in which the manuscript was originally bound.⁸⁶ It was through Roessler's mediation that Schatz was able to participate in the Secession exhibition. It was through him as well that Schatz was adopted by the group centering on Hauser and Georg Philipp Wörlen in Hals near Passau, with whom he exchanged graphic works.⁸⁷ Roessler describes the effect of Schatz's works on viewers at the time: "The gentlemen of the Secession jury who inspected the works of Sch. with us were initially puzzled but then enthusiastic about their artistic quality and promised him exhibition space if it became available."⁸⁸ Roessler judged Schatz to be an artist of the caliber of Schiele: "In ten years' time, those who have reservations today will struggle to limp after Sch., just as they did with Schiele."⁸⁹ Following the Secession exhibition, collectors began to take an interest in Schatz, and he was mentioned in the *Internationale Sammler-Zeitung*.⁹⁰

Also in winter 1923, Jenő Bálint, director of Galerie Helikon in Budapest, showed works by Schatz in the joint exhibition of the Vienna Hagenbund and the sculptor Elza Kövesházi-Kalmár, the participants being described as the "elite of modern Austrian artists."⁹¹ Bálint had previously exhibited works by Schatz along with those of Georg Ehrlich, Albert Paris Gütersloh, and Anton Peschka.⁹² Gütersloh was a member of the Neukunstgruppe around Schiele, which had a major exhibition in Budapest in 1912 and exhibited after 1918 at the Kunstschau, a presentation of Austrian art initiated by the Klimt group,⁹³ which Schatz joined in 1922.⁹⁴ By that time he already boasted a large portfolio of graphic works. In his nude drawings – Ex 22002 ←←, Ex 38991 ↑, Ex 5945 ↑, Ex 40263 – and pictures of suburban Viennese architecture, such as *The Walled Garden*, 1922 – Ex 5790 →, he endeavored to profile himself—encouraged by Hevesi and Roessler—as Schiele's

Ex 5790
Walled Garden, 1922
 Gouache and
 pencil on paper,
 Ortner Collection, Vienna

M 1921 3
*Small Town/
 Stein an der Donau*, 1921
 Tempera grassa
 and pencil on paper,
 Private collection



successor. His picture *Small Town/Stein an der Donau*, 1921 – M 1921 3 ↑ was a rework of two views Schiele had painted of the town of Stein. Schatz interpreted the scene subjectively as he saw it. In fact, his nude pictures were not influenced by the Expressionist idea of the damaged body, but were notable rather for their realistic portrayal of proletarian models and for their tactile linear precision. In 1923, the portfolio with twelve woodcuts mentioned earlier was published by Thyrsos Verlag with an introduction by Erica Tietze-Conrat, art historian and wife of Hans Tietze. She noted in her diary on January 8: “Viewed 300 drawings and several pictures by Schatz at Roden this afternoon.”⁹⁵ This confirms his recognition by the art-loving elite of Austria.

95
 Tietze-Conrat, Tagebücher,
 2015, p. 190.

96
 Archiv Neue Galerie, Belvedere
 Vienna (hereinafter ANG),
 ANG 162/1-4.

FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION AT OTTO NIRENSTEIN'S NEUE GALERIE

97
 Otto Nirenstein (1894–1978), from
 1933 he took the name Kallir;
 Austrian-American gallery owner,
 author, and art historian, founder
 of the Neue Galerie New York.

98
 Tessmar-Pfohl, Neue Galerie,
 2003, p. 30.

99
 ANG 588/6-11.

100
 Letter from Arthur Roessler
 to G. Ph. Wörlen, Vienna,
 November 19, 1923, Museum
 moderner Kunst Stiftung Wörlen
 Passau.

In December 1923, the same year he opened the Neue Galerie on Grünangergasse in Vienna with a Schiele exhibition,⁹⁶ Otto Nirenstein,⁹⁷ just six years older than Schatz and a former student of Johannes Itten in Vienna,⁹⁸ took Schatz under contract. He financed a trip to Italy, receiving postcards sent by Schatz from Florence, Venice, Bologna, Rome, and Sicily.⁹⁹ It is probable that the acquaintance with Schatz came about through Roessler. Nirenstein planned a Schatz exhibition for the following year, which Roessler wrote about in a letter to Wörlen:

“Then there is to be a collection with Edvard Munch and Schatz. Schatz is working like a man possessed [...]. He has completed a cycle of twelve pencil drawings for the ‘Cherubinischer Wandersmann’ by Angelus Silesius, which can only be described as ‘grandiose.’ At the same time he has cut around a cubic meter of wood, and he is currently painting small, many-figured tempera pictures with the pithiness of a Peasant Bruegel.”¹⁰⁰



M 1922 7

Apostle, 1922

Oil and pencil on board,

Private collection



Ex 33450

St. Jerome in His Study,

Angelus Silesius cycle, 1923

Pencil on paper,

Private collection

The first joint exhibition of Schatz's work took place in September 1924 at the Neue Galerie, together with sculptural works by Mario Petrucci, including one of Egon Friedell. Schatz's solo exhibition included paintings, watercolors, and graphic works. The underlying technique in the two paintings *Small Town/Stein an der Donau*, 1921 – M 1921 3 8, as well as in *Sermon*, dedicated to Arthur and Ida Roessler, 1923, *Apostle*, 1922 – M 1922 7 1, and *Encounter with Death*, 1921, demonstrated an astonishingly skillful, expressive, old-masterly painting style with a glaze-like paint application. As with the illustrations for Morgenstern, his drawings – Ex 33450 1 responded to the exclusive tastes of bibliophiles for contemporary illustrative graphic works, as published by Roessler and Nirenstein in their luxury editions by Avalun Verlag and Johannespresse.¹⁰¹ He developed a new scraping technique in his woodcuts, permitting gray tones and soft shading – Ex 41309. One of his first and most loyal collectors was the writer and art critic Max Roden. The exhibition was not a success in terms of sales, and in October Nirenstein demanded a considerable sum from Schatz in repayment of monies owed.¹⁰² Thanks to his extensive training at the Vienna School of Applied Arts, Schatz soon took on all manner of tasks for the Neue Galerie, including its corporate design, exhibition posters, invitations, and interior designs for exhibitions and special events, such as Christmas markets. Posters in 1924 included his own and Max Slevogt's exhibitions, and the Christmas market.

¹⁰¹

Questionnaire 1947 (see n. 80).

INTERIOR ARTIST IN THE GESAMTKUNSTWERK TRADITION

¹⁰²

Letter from Otto Nirenstein to
Otto Rudolf Schatz,
October 16, 1924, ANG 588/10.

¹⁰³

Schatz, *Künstler*, 1949, p. 352.

As late as 1949, Schatz wrote: "My main focus was always murals."¹⁰³ Since the Secession exhibitions at the turn of the century, interior art as a function of the *gesamtkunstwerk* idea had been one of the teaching objectives at the School of Applied Arts. The idea was further developed, using the style vocabulary of the avant-garde, in Cizek's experimental interior concepts of Viennese Kineticism. Schatz, who was averse to stylistic mannerism, approached his interior design



Ex 41906
Béla Uitz,
Vasilij Blasenij/
St. Basil's Cathedral
in Moscow, 1921
Watercolor on paper,
Courtesy of Galerie
Kieselbach, Budapest



M 1924 10
Vienna Artists' Christmas
Market, 1924
Interior design

Photograph,
ANG 375/11,
Color reconstructed by
Matthias Kendler, Belvedere

Photograph,
ANG 375/12

Photograph,
ANG 375/9



work from a Constructivist perspective and with an elementary, craftsman-like attitude. For the fortieth anniversary exhibition of the Vienna Kunstgewerbeverein at the Österreichisches Museum, the architect Robert Oerley designed the *Country House Lobby*, with wood paneling painted by Schatz using an old-fashioned technique with geometric arabesques in the style of a Russian country house – M 1924 7 →, Ex 6291 →. “Carry Hauser supplied a few paintings [...] for this highly successful interior design,” wrote Ankiewicz-Kleehoven.¹⁰⁴ In a remarkable synergy of wall and panel painting, the two Strnad students Schatz and Hauser created an exotic spatial impression that visually animated the walls, with Hauser’s avant-garde painting clearly harmonizing with the ornamental concept devised by Schatz and Oerley.¹⁰⁵

Schatz’s talent as an interior artist was once again demonstrated in December 1924 with his design for the applied arts Christmas exhibition at the Neue Galerie.¹⁰⁶ Fortunately, black-and-white photographs of the exhibition have survived in the archive of the Museum of Applied Arts.¹⁰⁷ His concept gave a rhythm to the space through an abstract, visually animating geometric pattern in vivid colors—probably red, blue, and yellow – M 1924 10 ←. The synergic three-dimensional effect was achieved chiefly through the color scheme, with simple wooden booths effectively integrated into the overall concept.¹⁰⁸ The vibrant spatial impression was enhanced by the theatrical setting of a small town. The booths with their exquisite arts and crafts displays were incorporated in an almost Potemkin-like cityscape, so that visitors experienced the exhibits on imaginary streets and squares. The wall paintings with ornamental architectural motifs incorporated the “x” from Schatz’s monogram—familiar to collectors and exhibition visitors—testifying to his presence and authorship, as in his diary entries.

Within the stage-like concept, Schatz interpreted the formal Modernist vocabulary in a folk-art style recognizable to the Viennese audience, but using an approach similar to the Russian artists and set designers Mikhail Larionov and Nataliya Goncharova, or to Marc Chagall. He thus transferred the Jugendstil concept of the *gesamtkunstwerk* to the formal language of the contemporary avant-garde, yet in a different way than the Viennese Kineticists. Stage sets designed by Russian artists were shown in 1924 at Friedrich Kiesler’s *International Exhibition of New Theater Technology* at the Konzerthaus during the Music and Theater Festival of the City of Vienna.¹⁰⁹ The catalogue included an illustration of Chagall’s wall painting in the Moscow Jewish Chamber Theater, which created a similar rhythmic space using architectural motifs, representing a convergence of all the arts.¹¹⁰ Russian artists were also to be seen in a presentation by the Gesellschaft zur Förderung moderner Kunst (Society for the Promotion of Modern Art) at the Neue Galerie during Vienna’s “Russian Culture Week,” which also featured a slide show by the art historian Fannina Halle at the Museum of Art and Industry about the new art of Soviet Russia.¹¹¹

These presentations no doubt inspired Schatz, and Uitz’s views of Moscow can be clearly identified as a further direct source of formal inspiration. During his visit to Moscow in 1921, Uitz had been fascinated by the “countless churches” radiant “in gold, red, blue, and white.”¹¹² These pictures were shown in a solo exhibition at the Österreichisches Museum in 1923. In a review, Ankiewicz-Kleehoven mentioned the “Moscow impressions,” in which Uitz had achieved “a peculiar synthesis of Byzantine art” seen “through the eyes of a Bolshevik artist” who “softened the rigidity of forms with vibrant colors and a relatively free interpretation of the individual architectural elements.”¹¹³ His colleague’s avant-garde version of these religious buildings as a dynamic color composition with an Oriental flair was reflected by Schatz in the folkloric design of his temporary

104
Ankiewicz-Kleehoven, Vierzig,
1924, p. 2.

105
See Cabuk, Hauser, 2012, p. 142.

106
12th exhibition Neue Galerie,
Weihnachtsmarkt Wiener Künstler,
Vienna, opening on December 17,
1924, ANG 375/3-18; Schweikhardt,
Otto Kallir, 1983, p. 195.

107
ANG 590/8-16.

108
ANG 375/3-18.

109
Exh. cat. Vienna, Konzerthaus,
Internationale Ausstellung, 1924.

110
Ibid, p. 63.

111
Tietze-Conrat, Tagebücher,
2015, p. 274, n. 23.

112
Uitz in his Moscow epic, quoted in
Bajkay, Éva, Béla Uitz, *Arbeiten
auf Papier aus den Jahren
1913–1925*, in exh. cat. Vienna,
Albertina, Béla Uitz, 1991, p. 84.

113
Ankiewicz-Kleehoven,
Kollektivausstellung, 1923, p. 5.

M 1924 2
Conversation, c. 1924
 Oil on canvas, private collection

Ex 6291
 Carry Hauser, *Lovers*, 1919
 Watercolor on paper,
 private collection



M 1924 7
 Otto Rudolf Schatz and Carry Hauser
Lobby of a Country House,
 Photograph from the magazine
Österreichs Bau- und Werkkunst



M 1924 11
Southern Town, 1924, oil on wood, private collection

Small Town. The impression of space he thus created was talked about for a long time afterwards; Roden wrote of “fantastic architectural structures, the face of a fairy-tale city,” which transported the beholder into another world.¹¹⁴ Years later, in 1929, the Russian Christmas market at the Hagenbund was conceived by Hauser, Felix Albrecht Harta, Georg Mayer-Marton, and Robert Pajer-Gartegen under Schatz’s direction in a similar fashion as an ephemeral interior design concept.¹¹⁵

Within the new visual presentation of the Neue Galerie, the visitor was able to stroll through imaginary streets and was pointed by means of signposts and inscriptions to individual “stores,” such as the studios of Emmy Zweybrück-Prohaska, Vally Wieselthier, or Franz Singer, an Itten student at the Bauhaus, who, together with Friedl Dicker, had founded the Werkstatt bildender Kunst in Berlin in 1923. In contrast to the nationalist-*völkisch* interpretation of folk art that was to dominate later, Schatz and the artists at this exhibition, like the Russians or the German Expressionists of the Blauer Reiter group, saw it as a source of inspiration for Modernist art.

114
 Max Roden, *In einer Märchenstadt*,
 1924, ANG, reviews from 1923,
 no. 192.

115
 ANG 333/1-30; Roden, *Stadt*,
 1929, p. 3

ART FOR ALL

CONSTRUCTIVE OBJECTIVITY 1924–32

NEW ART FOR THE NEW MAN— THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ART COUNCIL

From 1925, Schatz became involved in the Social Democratic Art Council (Sozialdemokratische Kunststelle) in Vienna founded by David Joseph Bach for the purpose of bringing culture to the masses.

As early as 1920, in the activist manifesto *An die Künstler aller Länder!*, published in the first Vienna issue of *MA*, Kassák had advocated a new modern art for new revolutionary people as an international educational initiative that would foster an appreciation of contemporary art “through ethical and targeted cultural education of the proletariat.”¹¹⁶ Similar ideas in the Social Democratic Art Council program aimed at education for the workers’ movement also gave expression to the desire for artistic renewal. Kassák wrote: “The tragic individuals, like enchanted angels of mythology, carry in their souls and hold over us like a monstrosity the only reliable legacy of the revolution: active self-awareness. [...] In contrast to any class morality, we bring to light the eternal stability of ethics.”¹¹⁷ Robert Musil noted in an interview in early 1928 that “the defense and development of the free-thinking, humane, originally bourgeois ideology is undertaken today by the Social Democrats—often against the opposition of the bourgeoisie.”¹¹⁸

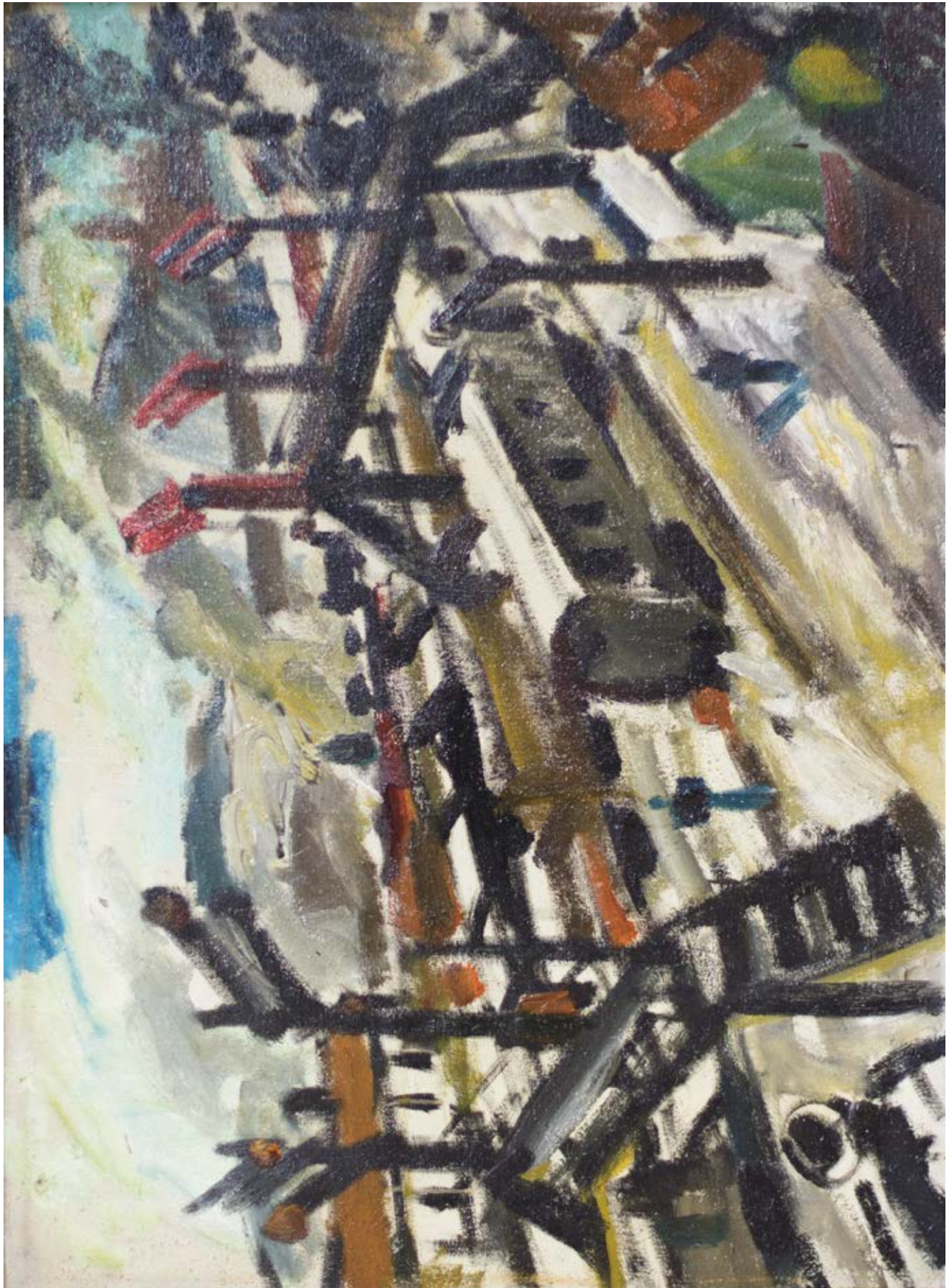
In his painting and graphic art, Schatz helped to shape the philosophy and achievements of the Austro-Marxists – M 1924 2 ←. Their education functionaries saw in him a contemporary incarnation of their ideal of “New Art” for a “New Man.” Art as an expression of the free individual was defined in Schatz’s pioneering use of pictorial media as an objective of cultural enlightenment. He used the efficient and inexpensive medium of graphic prints to establish iconic slogans in the form of emblematic figures and symbols from working-class culture, such as speakers or banner carriers.

He became acquainted with the architects Erich Franz Leischner and Franz Schacherl and their circle. Schacherl’s brother was an editor at the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. There Schatz met the writers Ernst Fischer und Josef Luitpold [Stern], who were involved in public education, and went on to illustrate and design a number of books for Luitpold. The author and playwright Fischer sought to enshrine the constructive values of the socialist ideology—freedom, justice, reason, progress, culture, and human dignity—in society through a renewal of the theater employing modern stage technology in the style of Erwin Piscator. Schatz remained in contact with Leischner even in the years after World War II, while Schacherl died tragically in exile in Luanda, Angola, in 1943. On July 14, 1930,

116
Kassák, *Künstler*, 1920, p. 4.

117
Ibid., p. 3.

118
An investigation by the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 1, 1928, quoted in John Warren, “‘Weisse Strümpfe oder neue Kitten’: Cultural Decline in Vienna in the 1930s,” in Holmes/Silverman, *Vienna*, 2009, pp. 33–34.





Ex 36566

Woodcut for Josef Luitpold's *Die Neue Stadt*, 1927 (1930), Book, private collection

Ex 11146

Cover of the special issue of Josef Luitpold's *Der entwurzelte Baum*, 1926, Gouache on board, private collection

Schatz dedicated a copy of *Die Neue Stadt* to Schacherl in commemoration of the Schattendorf trial and Justizpalast fire,¹¹⁹ with the words “to my true friend” – Ex 36566 ↑. Josef Luitpold was an initiator of the Kinderfreunde youth organization and head of the Socialist Education Department (Sozialistische Bildungszentrale) in Vienna from 1918 to 1922, and again from 1932 until the Social Democratic Party was banned during the civil war in 1934.

The Social Democratic Art Council was the most important organization within the workers' cultural movement, operating under the slogan “Kunst ins Volk” (Art for the Masses) and exerting a marked influence on cultural life in Vienna. From 1922 to 1924, for example, it organized readings by Karl Kraus from his world-war drama *The Last Days of Mankind*. Its main foundation, however, was the workers' symphony concerts on the national holiday (“celebration of the republic”) under the musical direction of Anton Webern.¹²⁰ These concerts were pioneering in their progressive program content and helped to promote the not yet widely accepted Modernist style.¹²¹ The Art Council also organized the Social-Democrat festival and celebration culture, above all the May Day rallies and national holiday celebrations on November 12. A special department for workers' celebrations, headed by Josef Luitpold, was established for this purpose from 1928. Schatz contributed numerous woodcut illustrations to the members' magazine *Kunst und Volk*, *Der Sozialdemokrat*, first published in 1926, and the *Arbeiterkalender* and *Arbeiter-Jahrbuch*, which contained a multitude of literary texts.

In 1924, the Büchergilde Gutenberg was founded in Leipzig as a workers' book club. It moved to Berlin in 1926 and had branches in Switzerland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.¹²² Josef Luitpold, its co-founder, completed several books with Schatz. In 1925, Schatz did the first book illustrations in Leipzig and Berlin, initially for *Im Satansbruch*, 1925 – Ex 32039 – by Ernst Preczang, editor-in-chief of the Büchergilde, and then for Josef Luitpold's *Der entwurzelte Baum*, 1926 – Ex 11146 ↑. He traveled for this purpose to Germany.¹²³ The Büchergilde Gutenberg targeted low-income population groups with a view to spreading literary education. In spite of the economic crisis, it sold 413,152 books in 1932 and had 85,000 members in 1933. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, it moved its headquarters initially to Vienna, Prague, and Zurich. In 1939, “all writings” by Josef

119

The defendants in the Schattendorf trial were acquitted on July 14, 1927, giving rise to the storming of the Justizpalast; see exh. cat. Vienna, Österr. Gesellschaft Kulturpolitik, Kälte, 1984.

120

Susanne Böck, “Neue Menschen,” in exh. cat. Vienna, Historisches Museum, Vienna 1993, p. 148.

121

Ibid.; Manfred Permoser, “Kunststelle,” in Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon online, http://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_K/Kunststelle.xml [accessed on March 14, 2017].

122

Michael Bühnemann / Thomas Friedrich, “Zur Geschichte der Buchgemeinschaft der Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik,” in exh. cat. Berlin, Kunsthalle, Welt, 1977, pp. 365–97.

123

Letter from Otto Rudolf Schatz to Otto Kallir, Leipzig, October 19, 1925, ANG 283/1.



Ex 5854

Moses cycle, 1925, printer's ink on paper
Private collection

Ex 38389

Moses cycle, 1925, printer's ink on paper,
Photograph, NLORS

Ex 38390

Moses cycle, 1925, printer's ink on paper,
Photograph, NLORS

Luitpold and many other authors were placed on a “list of harmful and undesired literature” and banned.¹²⁴

In early 1925, Schatz contributed the painting *Railway Station* from 1923 to a Kunstschau exhibition at the Künstlerhaus – M 1924 6 ←.¹²⁵ Gustav Klimt's *The Bride*, 1917/18, two paintings by Schiele, including *Last Houses*,¹²⁶ and works by Gütersloh, Franz von Zülow, Friedrich Oppenheimer, and others were also shown. Alongside works by Helene Funke, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* reviewer Alfred Markowitz made special mention of the “spirited painterly and linear quality of Otto Rudolf Schatz's three-dimensional landscapes.”¹²⁷ The painting by Schatz shown in the exhibition catalogue is of a station, a subject favored by Impressionists and Futurists alike as a symbol of modern life, in a dynamic, expressive style with color accents. In June 1925, Schatz took part in an exhibition at the Neue Galerie with Anton Faistauer, Franz Probst, and Marianne Seeland, contributing a motif from the Schwarzenberg Park. In *Moses Cycle* in 1925, he developed a minimalist drawing style using diluted printer's ink, in which he emotively captured the spirituality of the Old Testament story – Ex 5854 ↑, Ex 38389 ↑, Ex 38390 ↑.

In November 1925, Schatz married the jurist Hilda, née Rajewsky. They divorced after 1930.

124

Stern, Josef Luitpold: *Lexikon der Österreichischen Exilliteratur*, URL: <http://theodorkramer.at/archiv/exenberger/mitglieder/josef-luitpold-stern-exillexikon> [accessed on July 25, 2017].

125

Markowitz, Kunstschau, 1925.

126

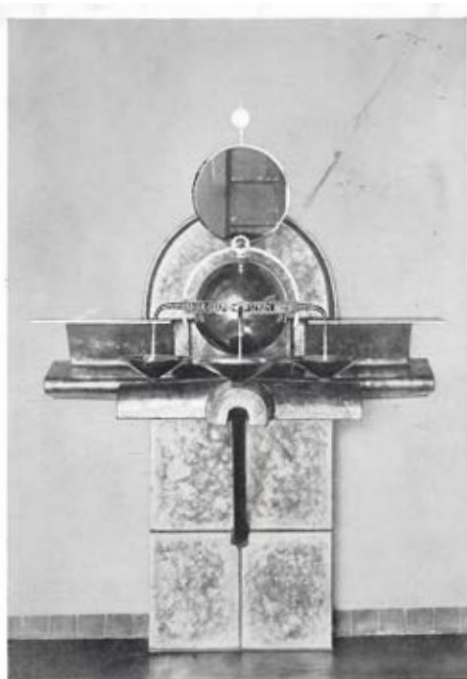
Possibly *End of Town/Town Crescent III*, 1918, cat. 76.

127

Markowitz, Kunstschau, 1925, p. 9.

CONSTRUCTIVE NEW OBJECTIVE VERISM

Inspired by his visits to Berlin and Leipzig, Schatz developed the New Objectivity/Constructivist pictorial language of Verism that became characteristic for him, confirming his sociopolitical engagement at the same time. From the start of his collaboration in 1926 with the Austrian poet and educator Josef Luitpold, “who together with Schatz investigated the contemporary yearning for freedom, he [Schatz] was dubbed the ‘Austrian Masereel.’ The worker, the working man, [...] man



Ex 41905

Rudolf Belling
*Drinking Fountain in the Buchdrucker
 Verbandshaus, Berlin, 1926*
 Colored ceramic, brass,
 destroyed in the Third Reich,
 postcard of Berlin 1926,
 Museum Moderner Kunst Würten
 Passau

and his task of giving a human dimension to modern technology, the machine as a blessing and a curse in giving meaning to modern technology, the machine as the blessing and curse of work—these are themes that no Austrian artist has confronted his contemporaries with in such an elemental and artistically modern fashion as the social artist Schatz,” wrote Viktor Matekja, as an eyewitness, in 1947.¹²⁸ Matekja, who had studied history, was active in the Resistance and interned by the Nazis. From 1945 he was City Councilor for Cultural Affairs in Vienna, where he met and supported Schatz on his return from concentration camp internment.

Around 1926, Schatz and his wife Hilda traveled to Berlin, where he visited an exhibition of Alfred Kubin’s work at Galerie Gurlitt.¹²⁹ He also visited the Buchdrucker-Verbandshaus, headquarters of the Büchergilde Gutenberg. This building, which belonged to the German printers’ union, was built between 1924 and 1926 by Max Taut, a leading architect of the Weimar Republic and, like his brother Bruno, a member of the group headed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Erich Mendelsohn.¹³⁰ A postcard Schatz sent to his friend Georg Philipp Wörlen in Passau shows the recently completed ornamental fountain by Rudolf Belling – Ex 41905 ↑.¹³¹ The public sculpture in the New Objectivity/Constructivist style is a prime example of the high artistic quality of the German avant-garde in the Weimar Republic. The Nazis labeled Belling’s art “degenerate,” and his works were destroyed. In 1926, by contrast, the modern building and the avant-garde elements inspired Schatz in his artistic commitment to the Büchergilde and his works for the “Kunst am Bau” campaign by the Social Democrats in Vienna. In a similar spirit, Schacherl and Schuster worked for the Vienna garden city and designed “proletarian houses of culture” (proletarische Kulturhäuser)¹³² in a style marked by constructive sobriety, material simplicity, and clarity.¹³³ In 1926, they were able to recruit renowned colleagues like Otto Neurath, Bruno Taut, and Heinrich Tessenow for the magazine *Der Aufbau – österreichische Monatshefte für Siedlung und Städtebau*. In his paintings, Schatz followed similar principles of anti-bourgeois, unadorned realism, articulated in a pictorial language marked by constructive, material-defined objectivity.

128
 Matejka, *Künstler*, 1947, n. p.

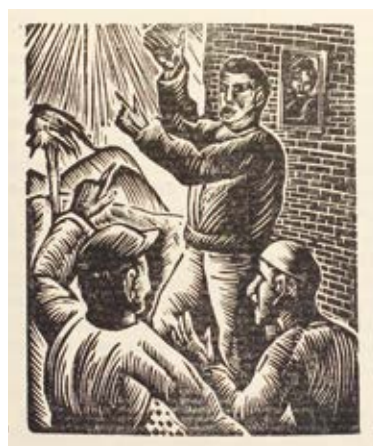
129
 Postcard from Hilda and Otto
 Rudolf Schatz to G. Ph. Wörlen,
 Berlin, n. d., Museum moderner
 Kunst Stiftung Wörlen Passau.

130
 Mediengalerie,
 URL: <http://www.mediengalerie.org/architektur.html>
 [accessed on May 30, 2017].

131
 Nerdinger, Belling, 1980, WV 55.

132
 Schacherl/Schuster,
 Kulturhäuser, 1926.

133
 Exh. cat. Graz, Neue Galerie,
 Moderne, 2001, pp. 381–82.



M 1926 1

Man on Scaffolding, 1926
Fresco, photograph in the daily newspaper *Der Abend*

Ex 36566

Woodcut for Josef Luitpold's
Die Neue Stadt, 1927 (1930)
Book, private collection

Ex 32084

Speaker, 1927, Woodcut,
illustration in *Arbeiterkalender,*
Literaturhaus Wien

Ex 41811

Bela Uitz in front of the fresco cartoon
"Construction Workers", 1919
Photograph,
Hungarian National Gallery

FRESCOS FOR THE VIENNA ARBEITERHOCHSCHULE

134

The building was demolished in 1960; see *Weblexikon der Wiener Sozialdemokratie*, <http://www.dasrotewien.at/seite/arbeiterhochschule.html> [accessed on January 2, 2018].

135

The building at Vienna 19, Sickenberggasse 1, was demolished in 1960; Sunday supplement, January 24, 1926.

136

Anon., *Arbeiterhochschule, 1926b*, pp. 8–9.

137

Ibid.

From 1926, Schatz worked increasingly on artwork for building projects. On January 17, 1926, the Vienna Arbeiterhochschule (Workers' University), with Josef Luitpold as its director, opened in the building of the Maria-Theresien-Schlössel in the 19th district.¹³⁴ Schatz painted two murals, *Man on Scaffolding* and *The Speaker (The Assembly)* M 1926 1 ↑¹³⁵ in the eighteenth-century building, which was otherwise decorated with Baroque wall paintings by Bartolomeo Altomonte and Kremser Schmidt.¹³⁶ Contemporary illustrations and the woodcut for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*,¹³⁷ produced by Schatz on the same occasion, show the monumental figure of a worker among timber beams – Ex 41103. The painting was a reworking of Uitz's 1919 *Construction Workers* fresco from the time of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, rendered in New Objectivity/Constructivist style and adapted as a symbol of the workers in 1926 – Ex 41811 ↑.¹³⁸ To make the emblematic figure of the speaker more widely known, Schatz used the graphic medium of woodcut for the 1927 *Arbeiterkalender* – Ex 32084 ↑.¹³⁹ From January 15, 1927, until at least 1934, Schatz lived at Drorygasse 8 in the 3rd district – Ex 39311.¹⁴⁰ Franz Schuster,¹⁴¹ resistance fighter and victim of the Nazi terror in 1943, and Maria Jacobi¹⁴² lived at the same address.

WOODCUTS AS A MEDIUM FOR NEW OBJECTIVITY PICTORIAL JOURNALISM

THE NEW CITY 1926/27

Schatz designed the program for the premiere of the anthemic poem *Die Neue Stadt* by Josef Luitpold for the national holiday celebration on November 11, 1926, in the Great Hall of the Konzerthaus – Ex 37117.¹⁴³ The work, mockingly referred to by Karl Kraus in *Die Fackel* as “housing project cantata,”¹⁴⁴ dealt with the transformation of the urban environment. *Die Neue Stadt* celebrated the “public housing schemes of Red Vienna.” Alongside culture and education, it was to help manifest a new working-class identity.¹⁴⁵ Schatz provided didactic visual materials in the form of woodcuts depicting forward-looking, studious modern workers as the ultimate objective and climax of historical development. Like Fischer, Josef Luitpold sought to give expression to the solidarity and collective spirit of the working classes through workers’ choirs. The music was composed by Paul Amadeus Pisk in the form of a symmetrically structured choral work.¹⁴⁶ Josef Luitpold had written the words in 1925 for the opening of the Friedrich-Engels-Hof social housing project in Vienna, where the cantata was given an early performance as a “genuine Austro-Marxist” choral work extolling the achievements of Red Vienna’s housing policy.¹⁴⁷ For the topping out ceremony of Sandleitenhof in 1927, a musical version of Luitpold’s poem was performed. The celebration included performances by the men’s choir of the construction workers’ union and “proletarian chansons” by Béla Reinitz. Schatz once again provided drawings for the program.¹⁴⁸ Reinitz was a Hungarian critic, composer, and supporter of the workers’ movement, who set poems by Ady Endre to music. During the Soviet Republic in Budapest, he was government commissioner for art, music, and theater. In 1920, to escape political persecution, he fled to Vienna where he set Erich Mühsam’s texts to music.

Also in 1927, the text *Stunde der Befreiung* by Josef Luitpold was turned into an oratorio by Viktor Korda. The program accompanying the performance at the Konzerthaus on the day before the national holiday was designed by Schatz and featured a woodcut on the cover – Ex 35391. This workers’ symphony concert commemorated the proclamation of the republic on November 12, 1918, and was an expression of support for the democratic republican state. In 1926/27, Schatz created the luxury volume *Die Neue Stadt* – Ex 36566 ← based on Luitpold’s cantata, as a block book in woodcut technique, and in 1927, also with Luitpold, *Die Rückkehr des Prometheus*, which was published by Buchmeisterverlag Berlin – Ex 38586. While Schatz had not been consulted on the typography for the previous books, the modern design of the five hand-printed copies of *Die Neue Stadt* was entirely his, in terms of both text and illustrations. This outstanding example of Austrian graphic art from the interwar years was the result of a paradigm shift toward modern, Constructivist typography, inspired not least by Schatz’s fruitful encounter with the New Typography of Jan Tschichold and El Lissitzky in Berlin and Leipzig in the mid-1920s. The elementary, functional design of their books and posters, which was also predominant at the Bauhaus in Weimar, was based on geometric abstraction in the tradition of De Stijl and Constructivism. Friedrich

138
Bajkay, Uitz, 1987, WV 304.

139
Luitpold, Arbeiterkalender,
1927, p. 53.

140
Exh. cat. Salzburg, Festspielhaus,
fresco, 1931, removal notice, 1927
[Ex 39311].

141
Franz Schuster (1904–1943).

142
Maria Jacobi (1910–1976),
chairperson of the sozialistische
Arbeiterjugend and first female
Vienna city councilor,
<https://www.wienerwohnen.at/hof/427/Engelsberggasse-3.html>
[accessed on August 29, 2017].

143
Luitpold, Republikfeier, 1926;
Bach, Veranstaltungen, 1926.

144
Kraus, Wohnbaukantate, 1929.

145
Rásky, Arbeiterfesttage, 1992, p. 27.

146
Janke, Massenfestspiele,
2010, p. 88.

147
Jürgen Doll, “Sozialdemokratisches
Theater im Wien der Zwischen-
kriegszeit,” in Kucher, Moderne,
2016, p. 91.

148
For Béla Reinitz evening, 1927 see
Rásky, Arbeiterfesttage, 1992, p. 27.



Ex 41220

Out of Your Remains, 1928
Woodcut, private collection

Ex 41042

Organ Grinder, 1928
Woodcut, private collection

Ex 41306

*With The Wires of Our Ideas
We Span the World*, 1929
Woodcut, private collection

Ex 41480

*Paddle Steamer, Oil Tanks, and
Danube Barge Haulers*, 1928
Woodcut, private collection



149
Exh. cat. Vienna, Konzerthaus,
Internationale Ausstellung, 1924.

150
"The Hanged Man," 1922.

151
"Unity," published 1922–24.

152
"Wedge," published 1923/24.

153
Forgács/Miller, *Avant-Garde*,
2013, pp. 1128–1156.

Kiesler, for example, was guided by it in his design of the catalogue for the *International Exhibition of New Theater Technology*.¹⁴⁹ The Constructivist graphic art influenced the Hungarian avant-garde magazines *MA* by Lajos Kassák, as well as *Akaszott Ember*¹⁵⁰ by Sándor Barta, *Egység*,¹⁵¹ and, in particular, *Ék*¹⁵² by Uitz, Barta, and János Mácza, all of which were already being published in Vienna.¹⁵³ In 1922, *Ék* contained a report with illustrations by Uitz from his trip to Moscow and the visit to the Russian Constructivists at the Obmokhu (Society of Young Artists) exhibition in 1921—the celebrated *Second Spring Exhibition*, a milestone in the Russian avant-garde movement of the early 1920s, with Alexander Rodchenko, Georgiy and Vladimir Stenberg, and Carl Yoganson.¹⁵⁴ Reflecting his penchant for hand-crafted, constructive, material-based lettering form, in harmony with the content—and rather than using a universal typeface—Schatz painstakingly designed each page individually. Apparently he was inspired by the monumental

letters in *Ék*, while at the same time developing a New Objectivity/Constructive pictorial vocabulary for the pages with illustrations, so that the combination of text and image could indeed be called a *gesamtkunstwerk* embedding the pathos and content of the text within constructive Modernism. Not least thanks to Schatz's contemporary graphic design, which expressed this ideology in a modern pictorial language, Luitpold's *Die Neue Stadt* may be regarded as an incunabulum of the ideal of urbanization as a culminating achievement of civilization, as exemplified by the public housing program of the Vienna Social Democrats.

Around this time, Schatz also created the woodcut series *Industry*, 1926 – Ex 40316 –¹⁵⁵ and the two children's books for Johannes-Presse, *Reise um die Welt*, 1926 – Ex 41546 – and *Zirkus*, 1927 – Ex 36936 – with texts by Roden. With the woodcuts *Factory Chimney*, 1926 – Ex 35473 – and *Railway Accident*, 1927 – Ex 40657 – he also began series on the subjects of *Factory* and *Technology*.

FROM THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY

Schatz's graphic art included emblematic compositions dealing with mass unemployment – Ex 37135, Ex 33481 – and mourning for victims of political violence – Ex 41220 ←. His journalistic woodcuts depicted the social struggle in all its force, disseminating his observations to the wider public – Ex 41042 ←. In this way he promoted the idea of depicting social reality in art, which at the time still mainly centered on the traditional genres of portrait, landscape, and still life. He used visual codes that were understood even after the workers' movement was banned or increasingly marginalized, as in the picture of electricity pylons entitled *With the Wires of Our Ideas We Span the World*, 1929 – Ex 41306 ←.¹⁵⁶ In a similar vein, the New Objectivity artist Oskar Nerlinger completed a painting and etching in 1929 of the Berlin radio tower and overhead railway. Schatz's picture of workers towing a barge on the Danube was recognized as a call for solidarity – Ex 41480 ←.¹⁵⁷ His banner and torch bearers, public speakers, and construction workers, whose message was also to be seen in monumental painting works, served as familiar emblems of visual communication. In the woodcuts, frequently published in the Sunday supplements of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and other magazines as part of the public education program, he offered factual illustrations of scenes from everyday life of the working classes, like photographic snapshots or film stills. In the picture of workers falling off a scaffolding, the viewer is placed at the same dizzying height above the city as the tumbling workers – Ex 40627 →. The artistic viewpoint is that of a camera that captures the terrible moment in a matter-of-fact, evocative, realistic, and highly sympathetic manner as a commentary on the sociopolitical context. Schatz's technically accomplished pictorial stories, which replaced conventional understanding of artistic, anecdotal narrative with photographic objectivity, were welcomed by a good number of critics. One reviewer wrote on the occasion of Schatz's first participation in the 55th Hagenbund exhibition in Vienna in December 1927, which alongside Schatz's graphic work also included a collection by Paris artists: "Among the best examples of true graphic works by Viennese artists are 'Die neue Stadt' and the woodcuts of modern industry by Schatz, which speak volumes using simple means."¹⁵⁸

In the midst of the economic crisis, in February 1929, accompanying a report in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* about record low temperatures and poor people freezing to death, Schatz contributed a woodcut showing a group of unemployed

154
Bajkay, Éva: Hol a Kontextus?,
in: *Artmagazin*, no. 3, 2016,
pp. 58–64,
URL: http://artmagazin.hu/artmagazin_hirek/hol_a_kontextus_3509.html?module=38&mywbContentTypeCtrlAction=Item&mywbContentType_id=3
[accessed on July 25, 2017].

155
Daim, *Industrie*, 1978, p. 28.

156
Sozialdemokrat, 1929, 3, Title.

157
Rosenfeld, *Künstler*, 1928;
Sozialdemokrat, 1928, 2, p. 19.

158
Markowitz, *Graphikausstellung*,
1927.



Ex 40627

Fall, 1926

Woodcut,

Private collection



Ex 32903

No Smoking, 1929, Woodcut, private collection

Ex 33480

Woodcut for Ernst Preczang's
Stimme der Arbeit, 1928, private collection



men huddled in a warming room beneath a No Smoking sign – Ex 32903 ↑. This cynicism sharpens the viewer's awareness of the space allocated to these people and recalls the observation by Siegfried Kracauer in 1930 about the topography of unemployment offices, in which social conditions were reflected in the interior design of the rooms themselves. Kracauer described the “depiction of rooms as dreams of society,” stating that these spaces had degenerated from serving as a “passage” back into employment to being mere public offices on the periphery.¹⁵⁹

The woodcut *Coal Truck*, 1929 – Ex 34858 – shows a winter fuel truck being pulled by weary men and women. With his anti-heroic, unsentimental depictions, in which he deliberately distanced himself from classic themes, Schatz spoke to a new audience hitherto uninterested in art. These pictorial narratives are notable for their constructive figurative language with a precise dramaturgy of the protagonists' body language and movement. In their ability to authentically reflect the contemporary situation they represent a highpoint in graphic art in the New Objectivity style. The subtext and coding often contain subtle references to the politically volatile Schattendorf trial and Justizpalast fire.

In 1928, Schatz became a member of the Hagenbund and took part in its exhibitions until 1938. Together with Frans Masereel and Wörlen he provided illustrations for the 1929 *Arbeiter-Jahrbuch*, published by the Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung under Josef Luitpold. In 1928/29 he was involved in an unfinished book project with Ernst Preczang, *Die Stimme der Arbeit*, for the Büchergilde Gutenberg – Ex 33480 ↑, which featured unified typography and graphic art.¹⁶⁰ In 1932 Schatz used two of its woodcuts for the book *Klasse im Kampf* by Karl Schröder – Ex 32077 → – about the Berlin metalworkers strike, at a time when the political climate in Germany was becoming increasingly hostile. The cover illustration is a reworking of the wood block showing strikers in front of the factory against a monochromatic black background – Ex 19659-2. Another woodcut shows the strikers' spokesman, the agitator, speaking to the workers, while in the background an armed unit is taking up position to confront the strikers. Schröder, a resistance fighter, was arrested in 1936 and spent years in prison and in

159

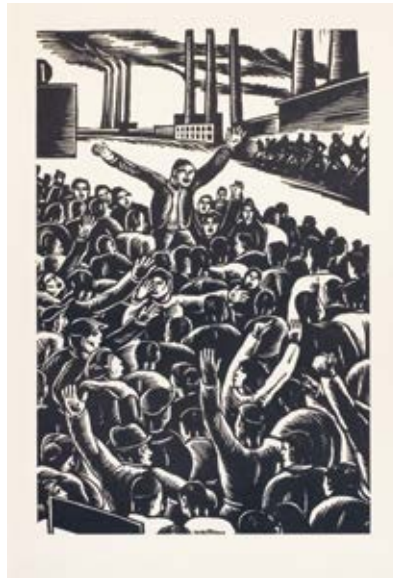
Stalder, Kracauer, 2003, p. 177.

160

The series was published
in 1999 by Wilfried Daim.

Ex 32077
Agitator,
 Woodcut for Karl Schröder's
Klasse im Kampf, 1928
 Literaturhaus Wien –
 Dokumentationsstelle für neuere
 Österreichische Literatur

Ex 32077
Striking Workers,
 Woodcut for Karl Schröder's,
Klasse im Kampf, 1928
 Antiquariat Seidel & Richter,
 Fürstenberg/Havel



Börgermoor concentration camp.¹⁶¹ In 1933, the Büchergilde Gutenberg in Germany was brought into line with the Nazi ideology, whereupon the Vienna Büchergilde immediately broke its ties with the Berlin head office: “The readers outside Germany were combined to form a new Büchergilde Gutenberg, which followed the same principles as the old one. [...] The Büchergilde, publishing in Zurich, Vienna, and Prague, has shown that it remains true to its old spirit.”¹⁶²

MONUMENTAL PAINTING AT THE TIME OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

In 1929, after the fresco work for the Arbeiterhochschule in 1926, Schatz once again devoted himself to monumental painting with the mural *Construction* for the reading room of the workers’ library in the Sandleitenhof public housing project,¹⁶³ as part of the “Kunst am Bau” program sponsored by Vienna City Council – M 1929 3 7. While *Man on Scaffolding*, 1926, showed a single construction worker, who appeared to emerge nimbly from the timber beams into the viewer’s field of vision, the library fresco, which still exists, reflects the idea of strength through solidarity. In a frieze-like arrangement of two panels separated by a pilaster, four men are carrying a crossbeam while two others are setting up a beam prop. Whereas similar subjects in Austrian painting, such as the monumental painting *Life*, 1909–12 (1924), by Albin Egger-Lienz – 3279 7, show a static, angular composition, Schatz’s picture is notable for its constructive dynamism. His pictorial narrative symbolizes the blurring of the distinction between manual and intellectual work in the Austro-Marxist workers’ library. Through its position above the wood paneling with the bookshelves, the foreshortened view emphasizes the height and monumentality of the building as the result of combined manual and intellectual effort.

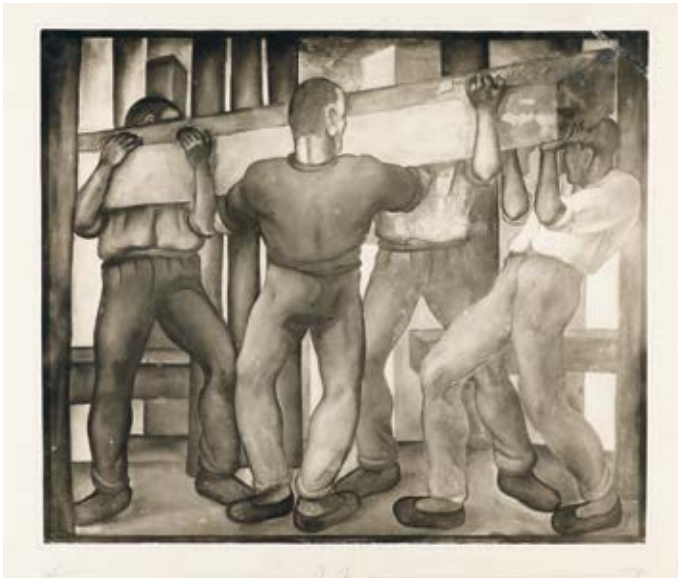
A luxury volume about Vienna’s new buildings by city architect Josef Bittner, published in 1930 by Gerlach & Wiedling, included large illustrations of these murals and the library hall.¹⁶⁴ The Socialist Education Department was

¹⁶¹
 Bühnemann / Friedrich,
 Buchgemeinschaft, 1977, p. 380.

¹⁶²
 Ehrenzweig, *Werdet Mitglieder*,
 1933, p. 170.

¹⁶³
 Rosa-Luxemburg-Gasse, 1160
 Wien.

¹⁶⁴
 Bittner, *Neubauten*, 1930, plate II.



M 1929 3

Construction, 1929, Wall painting
Contemporary photograph, NLORS

3279

Albin Egger-Lienz
Life, 1909–1912 (1924)
Casein tempera on canvas, Belvedere, Vienna

responsible for the construction of workers' libraries. The interior of the Sand-leiten library was originally designed by Josef Hoffmann, whose compressed, geometric proportions were broken up by Schatz's monumental worker figures in the frescoes. The number of readers at the workers' libraries exceeded that of independent or confessional libraries.¹⁶⁵ The frescoes were restored by Schatz himself in 1956/57.

STAGE SETS FOR THE FIRST REPUBLIC

Schatz's work as a set designer in 1929 and 1930 has been almost forgotten today. He produced stage sets for Social Democratic festivities using the resources available and taking inspiration from the modern stage art of contemporary theater in Germany and Russia. Under the slogan "Feste der Festlosen"¹⁶⁶ and with a view to creating a proletarian festive tradition, David Josef Bach had established a speaking choir group within the Social Democratic Art Council as the nucleus for a proletarian theater with public involvement. Bach hoped to invite Piscator to Vienna for guest productions and supported the modern production methods using image projection, which the latter made increasing use of.

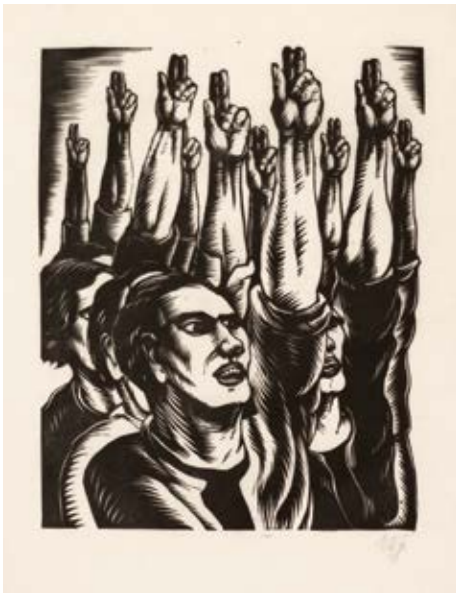
So far, we know of three stage sets designed by Schatz. One was for the performance of the speaking choir work *Frühlingsmysterium* by Bruno Schönkank in July 1929 at the Raimundtheater, as part of the International Youth Meeting in Vienna.¹⁶⁷ The set, which he produced together with Schacherl, is shown in the commemorative publication of 1929.¹⁶⁸ The second was for the revue *Von gestern bis morgen* by Robert Ehrenzweig in the Mozart Hall of the Konzerthaus during the May Day celebrations, an event by the moving choir of the Workers' Sports Club in 1930. The third was for Friedrich Wolf's play *Die Matrosen von Cattaro*, adapted by Friedrich Oppenheimer for the national holiday celebration by the Vienna workers' organization in the Great Hall of the Konzerthaus on November 11, 1930.

¹⁶⁵
Susanne Böck, *Neue Menschen*,
1993, p. 146.

¹⁶⁶
Bach, *Feste*, 1929. [Translator's
note: The slogan refers to the idea
of a festival for a class without a
festival tradition].

¹⁶⁷
F. K., *Mensch*, 1929.

¹⁶⁸
Festschrift, 1929.



M 1929 5

Franz Schacherl and Otto Rudolf Schatz, Set design for Bruno Schonlank's *Frühlingsmysterium*, whereabouts unknown, illustration in *Festschrift. Internationales sozialistisches Jugendtreffen vom 12. bis 14. Juli 1929 in Wien*, Vienna 1929

Ex 39591

Set design for Bruno Schonlank's *Frühlingsmysterium*, 1929
Watercolor on paper, private collection

Ex 35494

Loyalty to the Fallen Forever!, 1927
Woodcut, private collection

Ex 38537

The Crucified Worker, 1928
Woodcut, private collection

169

Rásky, *Arbeiterfesttage*, 1992, p. 30.

170

Doll, *Theater*, 1997, p. 50;
Fischer, *Jugend*, 1927.

171

Barbara Lesák, "Die russischen Gastspiele in Österreich: 1910–1936," in exh. cat. Vienna, Theatermuseum, Theaterkunst, 1993, pp. 18–20.

The subject of the speaking choir work *Frühlingsmysterium* was the factory workers' longing for sunshine and freedom and the struggle of spring against the bricks and mortar of the city, as a revolutionary metaphor – M 1929 5 ↑.¹⁶⁹ Schacherl and Schatz designed a stage set with a podium for the choir and responding choir as a spatial representation of the class struggle. Surviving sketches show a mass play pervaded by the pounding "rhythm of wild machines" and the "breath of the revolution" blowing through the set – Ex 39590, Ex 39591 ↑, Ex 39592.¹⁷⁰ The Constructivist stage set, consisting of no more than a few geometric shapes, stairs, and grills, took its cue from modern theater productions. At the time, there were any number of guest performances by Russian theater troupes in Vienna, such as those in 1928 by the Moscow State Jewish Theater at the Carltheater, which used stage sets "consisting of walk-in Constructivist elements" by Robert Falk and others.¹⁷¹

The model for the speaking choirs was the chorus in classical tragedy. In a revival of the Prometheus cult, the idea of the working class “New Man” made reference to classical mythology. The commemorative poem became a new form of democratic celebratory culture harking back to the festivities of Antiquity or the French Revolution, such as the oath of loyalty at the Fête de la Fédération in Paris on July 14, 1790.¹⁷² Fritz Rosenfeld said of the speaking choir: “[...] It’s fighting art, it’s revolutionary, it’s proletarian confessional art.”¹⁷³ Rosenfeld was a film critic, dramatist, and author of speaking choir works, and collaborated with Ehrenzweig with a view to creating a form of agitational festival. In his graphic art, Schatz offered a suitable pictorial language to visualize this idea, as, for example, in the woodcut *Loyalty to the Fallen Forever!*, 1927 – Ex 35494 ←, pictured in July 1928 in the magazine *Der Sozialdemokrat*. The most obvious reference in this, however, was to the contemporary events surrounding the Schattendorf trial and the Justizpalast fire, thus creating a link between Antiquity and the present day. The content of Schatz’s graphic works reflected the festival program:

172
Janke, *Massenfestspiele*,
2010, p. 123.

173
Rosenfeld, *Gedanken*,
1926, p. 86.

174
Janke, *Massenfestspiele*,
2010, p. 106.

175
Jürgen Doll, *Sozialdemokratisches
Theater im Wien der Zwischen-
kriegszeit*, in Kucher, *Moderne*,
2016, p. 81.

176
Doll, *Theater*, 1997, p. 93.

177
Janke, *Massenfestspiele*,
2010, p. 115.

178
See Bertsch, *Arbeiter*, 1997.

179
Anon., *Maifestschrift*, 1929, p. 1.

180
Herbert-Exenberger Archiv der
Theodor Kramer Gesellschaft,
URL: [http://theodorkramer.at/
archiv/exenberger/mitglieder/
robert-ehrenzweig](http://theodorkramer.at/archiv/exenberger/mitglieder/robert-ehrenzweig)
[accessed on March 31, 2017].

181
Doll, *Theater*, 1997, p. 266.

182
See Warren, *Women*, 2002;
Manor, Giora, Gertrud Kraus,
in Jewish Women’s Archive,
URL: [https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/
article/kraus-gertrud](https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/kraus-gertrud)
[accessed on September 11, 2017].

183
Anon., *Maifeiern*, 1930, p. 3.

“Toward the sun / Our path / The festival of light /
The voice of life / The road / Down with war.”

In *Der ewige Rebell*, by contrast, Ernst Fischer made reference to Christian symbolism. The play was performed during the national holiday celebrations in 1925 at the Konzerthaus in Vienna.¹⁷⁵ Its subject was similar to Ehrenzweig’s *Festspiel der Viertausend*. This mass event took place in the Prater Stadium during the International Workers’ Olympiads from July 19 to 26, 1931, in front of 120,000 spectators.¹⁷⁶ As part of the play, the leader of the revolutionary proletarian masses was nailed to a two-meter-high cross, which was placed opposite the “moloch of capitalism”¹⁷⁷ thus alluding to the “power of the Church as an accomplice of capitalism.” A similar message was implicit in Schatz’s woodcut *The Crucified Worker*, 1928 – Ex 38537 ←.¹⁷⁸

During the 1930 May Day celebrations, Ehrenzweig’s revue *Von gestern bis morgen* was performed in the Mozart Hall of the Konzerthaus, as part of an event by the moving choir of the Workers Sports Club, another production by the Social Democratic Art Council. The *Maifestschrift* of the Austrian Social Democrats contained woodcuts by Schatz, spreading the spirit of heroic resistance – Ex 37661.¹⁷⁹ From 1928 to 1933, Ehrenzweig was a leading member of the Politisches Kabarett, which had links to the Social Democrats, also supplying texts for it, along with Victor Grünbaum, Jura Soyfer, Karl Bittmann, and Ludwig Wagner.¹⁸⁰ In 1932, he published the magazine *Die Politische Bühne*. For him, the revue was not committed to any ideology, but he nevertheless produced it as a form of political agitational theater rather than the conventional bourgeois theater of illusion.¹⁸¹ The pioneering role of female artists is also of note in this modern production. It was directed by Maria Gutmann from the Volkstheater, while Gertrud Kraus conducted the moving choir. In 1929, Schatz made a woodcut as a birthday card for Gutmann featuring a poem on a spiral banner, written by him and Schacherl – Ex 39024 →. In this, they mention the “speaking choir children,” speaking choir works being the first form of autonomous Social Democratic theater. Gutmann worked for the Social Democratic Art Council in Vienna and directed the Junge Bühne, producing socially committed plays, including Brecht’s drama *Die Mutter* and Wolf’s *Matrosen von Cattaro*. Like Kraus, she emigrated to escape the Nazis, living in exile in France and later in New York, while Kraus settled in Israel.¹⁸²

The performance of the revue at the Konzerthaus was conducted by Anton Webern, with the stage set designed by Schatz.¹⁸³ The first part of the text, which



Ex 39588
*Sailors Hoisting the Red Flag on Board the
 Imperial and Royal Warship St. Georg, 1929*
 Indian ink and watercolor on paper,
 private collection



Ex 39024
*Birthday Card for
 Maria Gutmann, 1929*
 Woodcut, private collection

184
 Doll, Jürgen, "Sozialdemokratisches Theater im Wien der Zwischenkriegszeit," in Kucher, Moderne, 2016, p. 92.

185
 Ibid.

186
 A. G., Maifeiern, May 6, 1930.

187
 Republikfeier, program, 1930, p. 41

188
 Aufstand der k. u. k. Kriegsmarine in Cattaro, URL: <http://litkult1920er.aau.at/?q=stichworte/aufstand-der-matrosen-der-kuk-kriegsmarine-cattaro> [accessed on September 6, 2016].

189
 Wolf, Leben, 1930, p. 9.

190
 Frei, Matrosen, 1927.

191
 Doll, Theater, 1997, p. 225.

192
 Ibid.

193
 Wolf, Matrosen, 1930, p. 9.

194
 Ibid., p. 8.

195
 smk, Matrosen, 1930, p. 9.

has not survived, was a compilation of various poems, and the second half was written by Ehrenzweig. Key themes of the revue *Von gestern bis morgen* were the "enslaved peoples of the world, war, inflation" and "organized capital."¹⁸⁴ The content addressed the worldwide suppression of the working classes and the effects of war, inflation, and crisis.¹⁸⁵ Ehrenzweig described the history of mankind with the final triumph of the proletariat. The Art Council choir and two moving choirs took part. Schatz's very modern stage design featured technological innovations inspired by Piscator and projection techniques borrowed from agitprop theater. A reviewer wrote "[...] the stage set alone is an ingenious innovation. Otto Rudolf Schatz, who designed the sets, effectively projected ideograms of the location as shadow images onto a red curtain at the back of the stage: an idea with a most striking effect."¹⁸⁶

For the national holiday celebration of the Vienna workers organization in the Great Hall of the Konzerthaus on November 11, 1930, Schatz designed the stage sets for the previously mentioned adaptation by Oppenheimer of Wolf's play *Die Matrosen von Cattaro*, again directed by Gutmann.¹⁸⁷ Oppenheimer, alias Friedrich Heydenau, was the brother of the painter Max Oppenheimer. The agitprop play described the peaceful revolt of 4,000 to 5,000 sailors in the Austro-Hungarian army from February 1 to 3, 1918, reflecting the anti-monarchist attitude of the Austrian Social Democrats.¹⁸⁸ Wolf, a German doctor and writer, said his aim had been to write a "contemporary piece that drives people forward," as reported in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* on the occasion of the performance.¹⁸⁹ He based the material on historical facts, which he adapted for the stage.¹⁹⁰ Bruno Frei had collected reports of the peaceful revolt and described the incident, which took place on an imperial navy battleship in Cattaro, now Kotor, in Montenegro. Wolf turned this into a communist agitation play, which the Berlin Volksbühne canceled for political reasons after just a few performances.¹⁹¹ One of the models for the play was Sergei Eisenstein's 1928 film *Battleship Potemkin*.¹⁹² As reported in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 1,800 "friends of agitational poetry" attended the event in the Great Hall of the Konzerthaus.¹⁹³ Schatz's design sketch for the set shows the decisive moment when the sailors are hoisting the red flag – Ex 39588 ←.¹⁹⁴ The play, which has been compared to Gerhard Hauptmann's *Die Weber* and Georg Büchner's *Danton*, was later shown in the same production at the Renaissancebühne, where it enjoyed a rapturous reception.¹⁹⁵



Overleaf:

M 1930 3
Bathers / Girls in a Landscape, 1930
 Oil on canvas, private collection

M 1930 5
Exposure / Prater Stall, 1930
 Oil on canvas, Hans Schmid
 Private Foundation, Vienna

M 1930 4
Artistes / Hope, 1930
 Oil on canvas,
 Leopold Collection, Vienna

M 1931 1
Balloon Seller, 1931
 Oil on canvas, Belvedere, Vienna

NEW OBJECTIVITY PAINTING IN THE HAGENBUND

In parallel with his theater activities, Schatz also developed a new focus on socially critical Realism in his work as a painter. With large-format pictorial narratives like *Bathers/Girls in the Landscape* – M 1930 3 →, *Exposure* – M 1930 5 →→, *Artistes*, both 1930 – M 1930 4 →→, and *Balloon Seller*, 1931 – M 1931 1 →→ he showed himself to be a painter in the New Objectivity style with Verist, sometimes brittle, and eminently anti-classical imagery – M 1930 1 ← – using motifs from the Prater environment in which he integrated aspects from his progressive graphic work. With a view to attracting a new audience, he completely abandoned the virtuosos style of his earlier drawings in favor of a pastiche-like, seemingly naïve-realistic collection of snapshots from real life, inspired by film and photography, which he assembled in a collage effect from individual visual photographic impressions. Reflecting its open-minded attitude, the Hagenbund exhibited these works, with the exception of the painting *Artistes*, in 1933 as manifestations of a socially critical Modernism and an expression of the New Art.¹⁹⁶

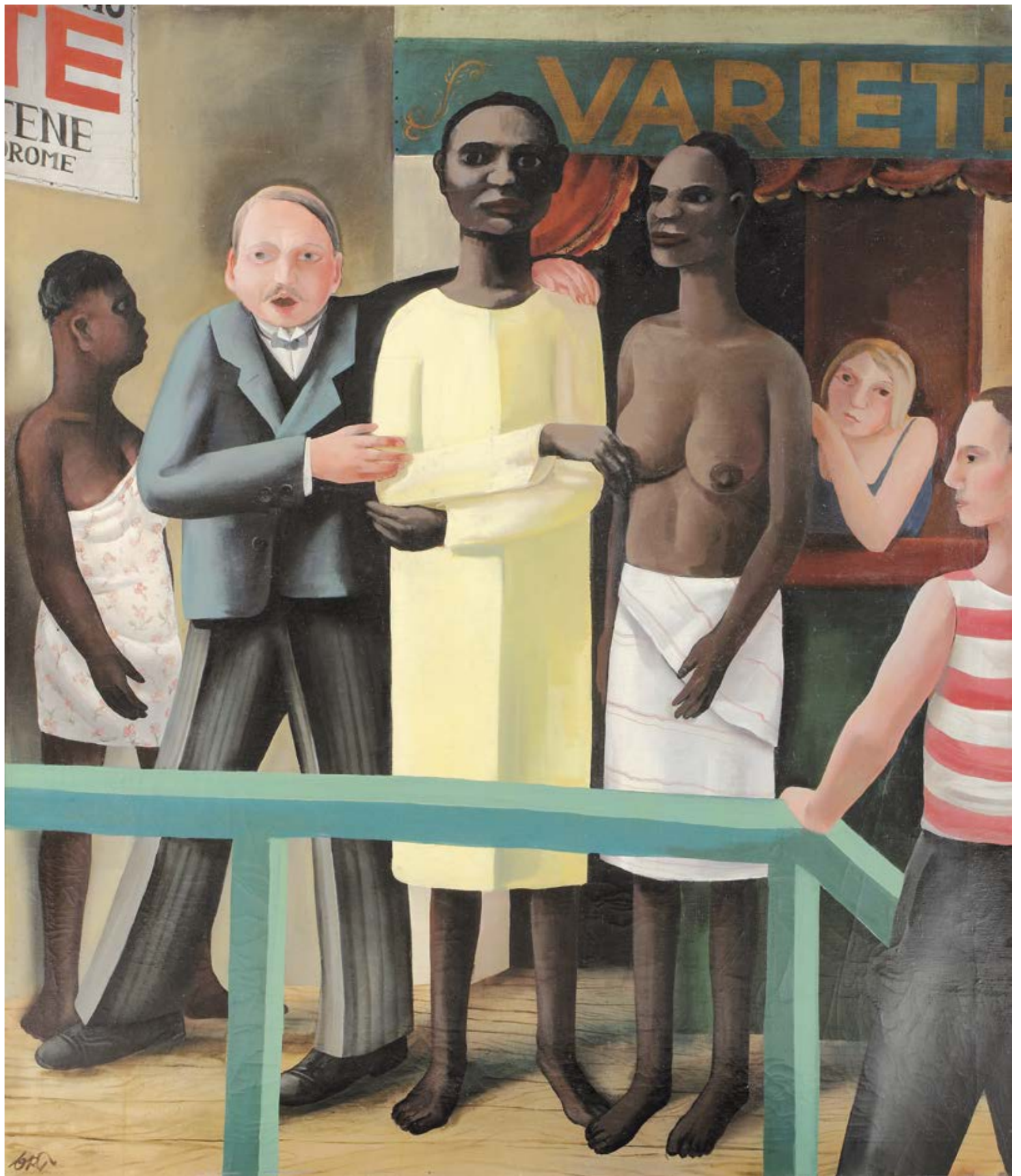
Viktor Matejka, who had lengthy conversations with Schatz about his art, described it as follows:

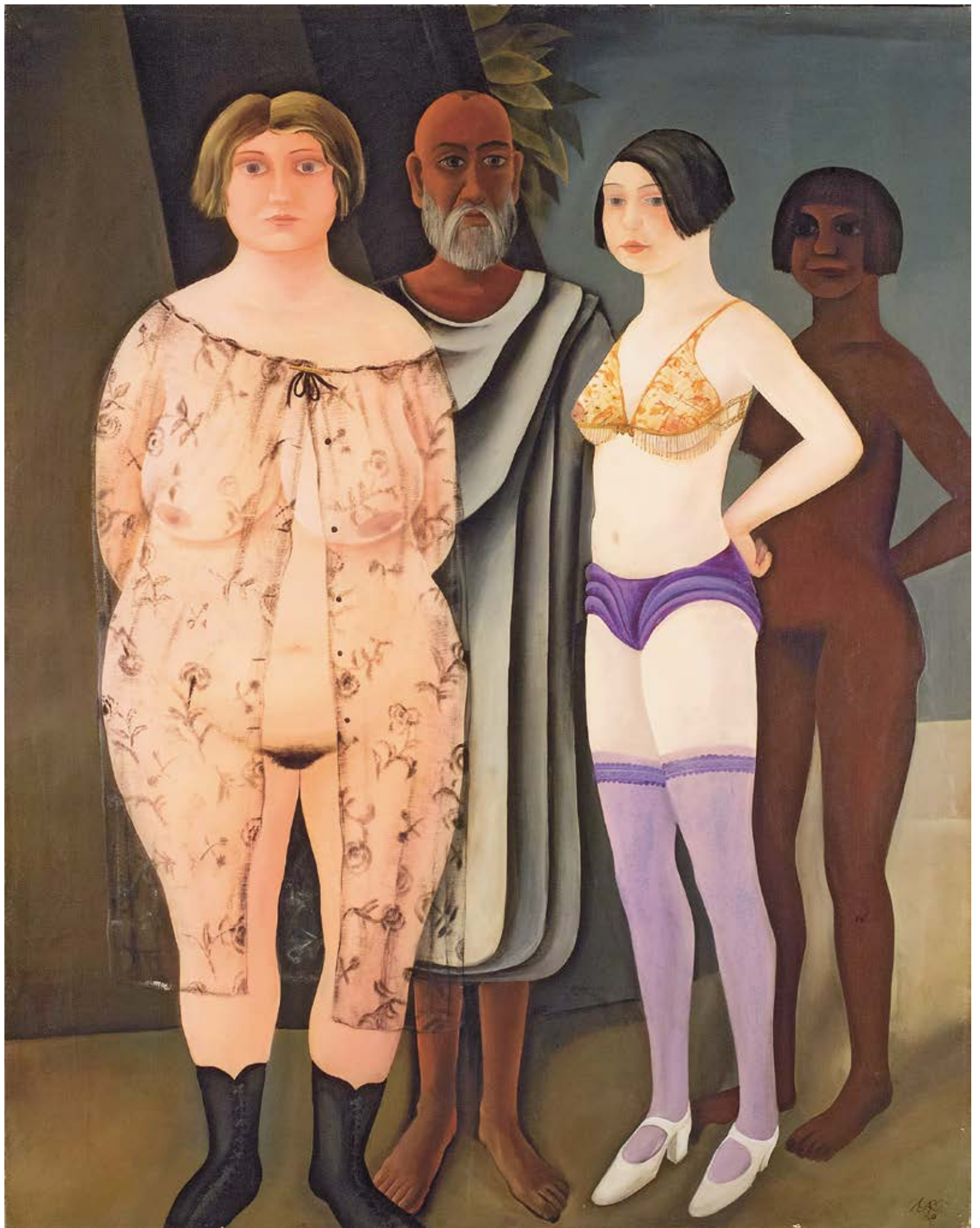
“Apart from his graphic work, however, Schatz has also not forgotten how to paint, and has produced some remarkable pictures, which in their sober and almost coarse ‘New Objectivity’ were guaranteed to be unsellable and also epitomized his way of considering not only form, but also the problems of the human world. The subjects were mostly from the world of fairs and sideshows, but this very choice of motif is characteristic. For Schatz saw art above all as a means of penetrating into the heart of life. In other words, either removing all deceit and pretense or exaggerating it with makeup and masquerade and in that way underscoring not only the wretchedness but also the stubborn self-assertion of those living, essentially, on the margins of society—this seems to be the true subject of these pictures.”¹⁹⁷

196
 Exh. cat. Vienna,
 Hagenbund, Frühjahrsausst.,
 1933, nos. 93, 94, 95.

197
 Matejka, *Künstler*, 1947, n. p.









M 1931 2
Composition, 1931
 Oil on canvas,
 Private collection

Ex 41006
Liberation, 1928
 Woodcut,
 Private collection



Schatz painted models as *Bathers* / *Girls in the Landscape*, with classical fluted columns like goddesses of Antiquity, while at the same time giving them fashionable short hairstyles and pumps as indication of their working class origins. A comparison of this painting with *Composition*, c. 1930 – M 1931 2 ↑ or *Artistes* clearly reflects the paradigm shift that took place in his painting around 1929/30. The three nude women in *Composition* are arranged in an oblique contrapposto position to one another and the mood is reminiscent of the bucolic scenes in the French tradition, similar to the paintings of his Hagenbund colleague Georg Merkel, who had studied in France and now upheld the French painting culture of Paul Cézanne in Vienna.¹⁹⁸ In his review of the Merkel exhibition at the Neue Galerie in 1929, the writer Heimito Doderer, who at the time worked as an art critic, had described the painting *Wretchedness*, which showed a girl with a soup bowl, as “far removed from any socially critical ideology, which would simply miss the point.”¹⁹⁹ Possibly also in order to respond to this evident absence of authentic, socially critical art, Schatz now turned to this aspect more decidedly in a revision of classical content. The shift toward the realism of New Objectivity in painting was also inspired by the presence in Vienna from 1925 to 1927 of Christian Schad, who in the last year of his residence had an exhibition at Galerie Würthle, reviewed by Markowitz in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.²⁰⁰

Reflecting this trend toward a revitalization of classical culture as a Social Democratic educational ideal, Josef Luitpold, Schatz’s mentor at the time, wrote the book *Die Rückkehr des Prometheus*, with a design by Schatz. To that extent, the painting *Artistes*, later known as “Hope,” may be seen in the context of the classical Demeter cult. The secret initiation and consecration rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries, named after the Temple of Demeter in Athens, was part of the state religion in ancient Greece. Seen in this way, the Prater artistes with their dubious reputation, painted with a materiality reflecting the meticulous detail of the New Objectivity style as taught by Schad—for example, in the transparent lace dress with floral pattern of the stout nude figure as Demeter with her artiste daughter Persephone in front of the tree of Socialism—were given a mythological interpretation by Schatz. No doubt there were several layers of meaning in these works, for Roden wrote in 1931, after a visit to Schatz’s studio: “The form is clear and simple, but is deeply moved. [...] the ‘three

198
 See Merkel’s painting
After Bathing, before 1930,
 reproduced in Chrastek,
 Hagenbund, 2016, p. 191.

199
 Doderer, Merkel, 1929;
 see also Tessmar-Pfohl,
 Neue Galerie, 2003, p. 72.

200
 Markowitz, Schad, 1927.

women,' the four 'artistes,' are metaphorical depictions of life stages or even continents."²⁰¹

Although the Schad exhibition at Galerie Würthle passed almost unnoticed by the media, his presence in Vienna made a great impression on the young generation. Nirenstein, former authorized signatory at Galerie Würthle and now its competitor, recognized a similar painterly talent in Schatz. Inspired by the interplay between morbid post-imperial aristocracy and Prater demi-monde, Schad painted some of his best portraits in Vienna, like that of *Count St. Genois d'Anneaucourt*, 1927, in which the transvestite also featured in the picture wears a transparent lace dress similar to that of the corpulent nude in Schatz's *Artistes*.²⁰² The motif can be traced back to Renaissance paintings by Sandro Botticelli. In his *Self-Portrait with Model*, painted in Vienna in 1927, Schad, according to his own notes, explicitly modeled his female figure on a "shooting gallery girl in the Prater."²⁰³ In spite of the formal inspiration, Schad differed from Schatz, who was six years younger, in his "outsider's view" of what was for him the exotic world of the Prater depicted by Schatz. In his diaries from 1921, Schatz noted in his distinctive telegram style:

"[+] life in the Prater is much too tragic [+] to be laughed about [+]
it's a lunatic asylum without a roof [+] I can't laugh about
lunatics [+]"²⁰⁴

The message of the poetry in *Die Rückkehr des Prometheus* by Josef Luitpold was the idea of international brotherhood, also in his translations of Afro-American poetry for the publication by Anna Nussbaum *Afrika singt*, 1929, published by Speidel Verlag in Vienna. Nussbaum²⁰⁵ came from Galicia and obtained a doctorate from the University of Vienna in 1907. She worked as a teacher at the Schwarzwaldschule with her aunt Eugenie Schwarzwald and, as a pacifist, was involved with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. For the 1930 *Arbeiterkalender* she translated Michael Gold's *Life of John Brown* into German. It was accompanied by Schatz's woodcut *Liberation*, 1928 – Ex 41006 ←.²⁰⁶ A condemnation of racism and an appreciation of Afro-Americans, transferred to a Viennese setting, was the subject of *Exposure*, 1930 – M 1930 5 ← ←, shown at the Hagenbund in 1933 under the title *Prater Stand*. The large-format painting is rightly seen as a milestone in Austrian New Objectivity. The realistic depiction of a black couple being displayed as "curiosities" in front of a variety theater was a rousing criticism of the racist background to such performances. The heroes of the pictorial narrative are not the white concession owner and fairground barker but the exposed figures of the two Africans. The blond girl under the Varieté sign observes the couple's exposure as a passive and empathic witness. The two are dressed not in ethnic tribal costume but in improvised and scanty loincloths and gowns. Contemporary media reports illustrate how highly topical this subject was at the time: The magazine *Die Bühne* celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Prater and recalled similar "sensations."²⁰⁷ In 1930, Gabor Steiner reported in the *Illustrierte Wochenpost* about the "plain presentation," "the life of a primitive tribe in their straw huts" in a "small Negro village" of the Ashanti in Vienna in 1897—in the zoo, of all places—an "ethnological show" that was enthusiastically received by the Viennese. "The 'Ashanti' were an attraction in Vienna! Rich and poor, commoners and aristocracy, everyone streamed to the zoo to look at this group of black people. [...] Vienna had never before shown as much interest in an ethnological show as it did for this 'troupe!'"²⁰⁸ The discrepancy between Schatz's pictorial narrative of voyeuristic curiosity and this description clearly shows the

201
Roden, *Bildwerke*, 1931.

202
Ratzka, Schad, 2008, WV 91.

203
Ibid., WV 87, p. 134.

204
Schatz, *Kurzbetrachtungen*, 1921.

205
Anna Nussbaum (1887–1931),
Romance philologist, teacher,
translator; Austrian National
Library, *Ariadne, Frauen in
Bewegung*,
http://www.fraueninbewegung.onb.ac.at/Pages/PersonDetail.aspx?p_iPersonenID=8674875
[accessed on May 4, 2017].

206
Luitpold, *Jahr*, 1930, p. 47;
Nußbaum, *Afrika*, 1929.

207
See photography *Die Dame ohne
Unterleib*, in *Die Bühne*, year 8,
no. 305, 1930, p. 21.

208
Steiner, *Wien*, 1930, n. p.

Ex 6328
 Carry Hauser, *Jazz Band*, 1927
 Oil on wood, private collection



development, in people like him, Josef Luitpold, and other artists, toward a more egalitarian view.

In the context of ethnological displays, Schatz's depiction vividly demonstrates, the distinctive typology of New Objectivity pictorial narrative. He proved to be a pioneer in the fight against racism and delivered this message to the Viennese public at a time of growing Nazi sympathies. Two years earlier, Ernst Krenek's jazz opera *Jonny spielt auf* had been the target of racial attacks by the Nazis, against which artists like Bettina Ehrlich or Hauser, with his picture *Jazz Band*, 1927 – Ex 6328 ↑ made a clear stand.²⁰⁹ Along similar lines, the cosmopolitan Hagenbund offered a platform for Schatz's pictures and presented the impressive trilogy *Balloon Seller*, 1931, *Prater Stand*, 1930, and *Bathers*, 1929, at its 32nd annual exhibition from April to June 1933. Schatz was a member of the exhibition committee and as such shared responsibility for the spaced presentation to enable "every picture to speak for itself."²¹⁰ Contemporary reviewers recognized them as works "from the margins of society, most concise."²¹¹ Schatz had already shown *Bathers* at the Hagenbund in 1931 under the title "Girls in a Landscape." Later it became known as "Moon Women." Critics at the time expressed the view that Schatz had created a shock effect "with two rigid and cheerless female nudes, who looked like unclothed store window mannequins."²¹² The strikingly new and avant-garde approach that was evident in these female nudes, combining Surrealism and New Objectivity, also shocked the art critics Adalbert Franz Seligmann and M. E. from the magazine *Der Wiener Tag*. Seligmann even described *Girls in a Landscape* as "a bad joke, to put it mildly" and noted that it was displayed separately "on the left of the vestibule."²¹³ M. E. wrote: "His [Schatz's] 'Girls in a Landscape' [are] a wooden joke, which not even the painter himself is likely to take seriously."²¹⁴ Ankwiciz-Kleehoven saw "Expressionist allures" in the "Girls in

209
 Exh. cat. Vienna, Jewish Museum
 Vienna, 2004, p. 220; Cabuk,
 Hauser, 2012, WV 1927 M 2,
 pp. 157–61.

210
 Brehm, Jahresausstellung, 1933,
 n. p.; exh. cat. Wien, Belvedere,
 Hagenbund, 2014, p. 233.

211
 Brehm, Jahresausstellung,
 1933, n. p.

212
 Friedmann, Künstlerbund, 1931.

213
 Seligmann, Kunstaustellungen,
 1931, p. 2.

214
 F. A., Hagenbund, 1931, p. 9.

a Landscape, the latter consisting merely of two bare trees, the stump of a column and the moon.”²¹⁵ Along with these reviewers, large sections of the public found it difficult to understand the artistic quality of New Objectivity and its anti-Classicist stance in the depiction of figures from the Vienna Prater.²¹⁶

There were in fact precedents for Schatz’s frontal nudes, such as Henri Rousseau’s *Dream*, 1910, a female nude on a canapé by moonlight, combined with beasts of prey in the jungle. This type of frontality was described in the context of Sigmund Freud’s essay *Medusa’s Head*²¹⁷ as “trauma of the gaze” and interpreted with reference to Picasso’s *Demaiselles d’Avignon*, 1907, as a fear of female sexuality.²¹⁸ In 1920s Vienna, the new type of emancipated, sexually liberated woman had led to a reappraisal of gender roles that weakened the patriarchal structure. If this viewpoint applied to Schatz, he overcame this discomfort in his later erotic works.

The third part of Schatz’s trilogy was *Balloon Seller*, 1931. It shows a looming figure behind two young girls against a night sky. The colorful round balloons, with their green tones reflected in the dress of the girl in the foreground, provide a luminous highlight as a Modernist echo of abstract imagery. Exuding an ominous sense of dread, the urban motif from the New Objectivity repertoire²¹⁹ depicts a suspense-filled moment of great consequence: invisible to the viewer, an admirer of the two girls—whom they gaze at, part shyly, part admiringly—has just bought them a red balloon in order to gain their trust. Schatz describes this scene, in which the balloon seller is a silent witness. The pictorial narrative evokes one of the most famous scenes in cinema history in Fritz Lang’s film *M—eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder*, which caused an enormous furor when it was released in 1931.²²⁰ Schatz was well informed about the latest film productions, not least through his friend Fritz Rosenfeld. In this movie, Lang’s first with sound, a blind balloon seller witnesses the abduction of a child and later becomes instrumental in capturing the murderer. This topical reference to film and photography showed Schatz to be a versatile and creative protagonist of Modernism, whose openness made his work accessible to a wider public. From the subtext, which was recognizable to alert contemporaries, a completely new way of reading the urban trilogy emerged, representing not only a qualitative highpoint in Austrian New Objectivity painting, but also offering a critical commentary on society at the time. This aspect of the work was completely missed or ignored by contemporary critics, however. Schatz was unable to sell his paintings and lived in utter poverty during those years.

The exceptional sensitivity and the attempt to create an unreserved and authentic representation of “the other” in the picture of the Africans in *Exposure* also show Schatz as pioneering in his criticism of colonialism. Unlike Paul Gauguin, who had taken a romanticizing perspective, Schatz took a socially critical approach in his depiction of the colonized populations. With an understanding based on the acceptance of differentness, Schatz studied the work of the native African painter Kalifala Sidibé, for whom Nirenstein organized an exhibition at the Neue Galerie in early 1930. The poster was signed and designed by both Schatz and Sidibé – Ex 40880 →. It shows three semi-nude African women in their tribal costumes. Nirenstein, who discovered Grandma Moses after emigrating to the USA in 1939, evidently saw similar qualities in the work of Sidibé and Schatz. The exhibition review in the *Reichspost* is symptomatic of the everyday racism and prejudice of the time. Under the title “Negro art,” it said:

“Kalifala Sidibé, who lives with two women and three children in two huts on the French bank of the Niger, has already been praised to high heaven by foreign critics as the ‘black Raphael.’

215
Ankewicz-Kleehoven,
Frühjahrsausstellung, 1931, p. 8.

216
Cabuk, Cornelia,
“Der Hagenbund als Plattform der
Moderne Zentraleuropas in den
20er und 30er Jahren,” in exh. cat.
Vienna, Belvedere, Hagenbund,
2014, p. 59.

217
Freud, *Medusenhaupt*,
1940, p. 105.

218
Foster et al., *Art 2004*, p. 82.

219
Cabuk, Cornelia, “‘Magische’
Sachlichkeit in Wien und
Österreich,” in exh. cat. Vienna,
Belvedere, Wien–Berlin, 2013,
p. 346.

220
The premiere took place at the
Apollo cinema in Vienna on
September 3, 1931; lb, *Film*, 1931;
anon., *Morgen*, 1931.

Ex 40880
 Kalifala Sidibé and
 Otto Rudolf Schatz,
Malereien des Sudannegers
 Kalifala Sidibé,
 Exhibition poster, 1930
 Chalk lithograph
 Picture Archives and
 Graphics Department, Austrian
 National Library, Vienna

Ex 40849
 Four Oriental Women, 1930
 Monotype, private collection



Well, perhaps this title goes a bit far, but as someone who is self-taught within his primitive environment, Sidibé is certainly a talent and an amusing portrayer of the life and activities of his dark-skinned fellow tribe members. [...] This exhibition has as little to do with art as the works of our rural Alpine hobby painters, but it offers an interesting insight into the worldview and culture of an unspoiled Negro painter.”²²¹

The exhibition was also shown at Galerie Alfred Flechtheim in Berlin, the Kunstverein in Prague, and by Hans Goltz in Munich.²²² In his intentionally naïve depiction of the couple in *Exposure*, Schatz was evidently inspired by Sidibé’s native painterly interpretation of the African world, the natural posture of the tribe members, and their large, uncomprehending and expressive eyes. Schatz drew a monotype for the exhibition poster of the Neue Galerie – Ex 40849 ↑, which may be seen as a compositional link to *Exposure*. It shows four standing Arab women, the one in the foreground with her arms folded across her chest as if in defense, similar to the man in *Exposure*. The final version of the poster, however, shows three bare-breasted African women based on a drawing by Sidibé. The posture of the African woman in *Exposure* was clearly based on the woman standing on the right in Sidibé’s drawing, except for the load balanced on her head, evidently in an attempt to achieve as natural and authentic a portrayal of nakedness as possible. The man in the yellow gown could indeed be a portrait of the African painter, whose likeness we know from a reproduction.²²³ Photographs of the artist and his family were also on show in the Neue Galerie exhibition.²²⁴ In 1934, the Hagenbund organized an exhibition entitled *Africa Exhibition: Madsimu Dsangara (The Shadows of the Forgotten)*, with a selection of exhibits by the Viennese Jewish anthropology professor and ethnologist Robert Heine-Geldern and the art historian Wolfgang Born from the collection of the Vienna Museum of Ethnology. Far from documenting a primitive lifestyle, the works were shown for their intrinsic artistic value.²²⁵

²²¹
 tr, Negerkunst, 1930.

²²²
 ANG, Ausstellungskorrespondenz
 337/1–17.

²²³
 Stevenson, Road, 2014, p. 8.

²²⁴
 Ankwic, Kunstaustellungen, 1930.

²²⁵
 Exh. cat. Vienna, Belvedere,
 Hagenbund, 2014, p. 236.



Ex 41276
Street Scene, 1929
 Woodcut for *munka* (1930),
 PIM Budapest

Ex 40732
Hot Chestnut Man, 1931
 Woodcut, private collection

VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

As a politically committed artist, Schatz saw his work not as art in the bourgeois sense but as a form of constructive, visual communication. Although he received little professional recognition in his own country, possibly because of his political activism, the rigorous pictorial language of his graphic art had an international impact. Later, a ban on working and exile were to cause a definite hiatus in his career.

In fall 1929 he showed a collection of woodcuts at a graphic art exhibition in the Hagenbund, which Markowitz described in a review as “among the most impressive works on show at the exhibition.”²²⁶ He wrote:

“It is no exaggeration to describe his woodcuts, which often show everyday scenes, as monumental. In particular, the quiet dignity of his hardworking creatures, be they human or animal, is given artistic expression through his gouge. A heavily laden coal truck, being pulled up a slope by horses helped by humans, may serve as a particularly salient example here.” – Ex 34858, Ex 32025.²²⁷

²²⁶
 Markowitz, Hagenbund, 1929.

²²⁷
 Ibid.

²²⁸
 Rosenfeld, *Artiste*, 1929b.

²²⁹
 Masereel, Frans: *The City*,
 ICA London 6.5.–2.7.2017,
 URL: <https://www.ica.art/whats-on/frans-masereel-city>
 [accessed on September 9, 2017].

Schatz became internationally renowned for his graphic art, with Rosenfeld writing about him in the Paris magazine *Monde*.²²⁸ During the economic crisis, around 1930, Schatz’s work began to show a new suggestive force derived from its formal concentration and reduction, geometric structuring, and the stark contrast within a square picture format, generating an emblematic, compressed pictorial message that anticipated future graphic novels. To that extent he was indeed comparable to the Belgian graphic artist Frans Masereel, who in 1925 had published a series of fifty woodcuts on the subject of “the city.”²²⁹ Seldom has the prevailing mood at that time of loneliness and social indifference been more precisely and hauntingly transformed into a minimalistic confrontation of contrasting geometric patterns and figurative line drawings than in Schatz’s woodcut *Hot Chestnut Man*, 1931 – Ex 40732 ↑ or *Man on the Bridge*, 1930 – Ex 40767.

Ex 40640
Machinists, 1929
 Woodcut for *munka* (1931),
 PIM Budapest



The picture's formal stability communicates its message more forcefully than Masereel's anecdotal diversity.

In 1926, after his return to Budapest, Lajos Kassák used three woodcuts by Schatz as cover illustrations for his magazine *munka*. Like the Social Democratic Art Council in Vienna, the *munka* circle organized speaking choir performances as manifestations of a modern working-class culture.²³⁰ Schatz's woodcuts made just as powerful an impression as the pictures of poor, unemployed, and homeless people taken by amateur photographers, practitioners of the social photography movement initiated by Kassák. The September 1930 issue contained a street scene by Schatz showing an old woman rummaging through a trash can next to passive onlookers in fur coats – Ex 41276 ←.²³¹ The cover of the June 1931 issue featured a woodcut with an engineer next to a locomotive – Ex 40640 ↑²³² echoing the symbolism of Bortnyik's painting *Red Locomotive*, 1918, which readers would have been familiar with. In 1934, the year of the civil war, a woodcut showing soldiers shooting an insurgent featured on the cover of the June issue – Ex 35488 ↗.²³³ This picture had already been on the cover of the March 1928 issue of *Der Sozialdemokrat*, with the caption “not everyone who is buried is dead,” recalling the execution of insurgents in 1848.²³⁴ The printing of these graphic works in *munka* shows the potency and international relevance of Schatz's pictorial language against the background of an increasing marginalization of the workers' movement. By 1934, its political destruction anticipated in the execution scene had already become a sad reality.²³⁵ The emblematic black-and-white code emphasized the threat of political violence as a dangerous reality. The woodcut had even more expressive force than a photo reportage, in that Schatz combined the element of suspense from Édouard Manet's sober pictorial narrative *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*, 1867, with the emblematic Constructivist figurative language of Gerd Arntz, as, for example, in his illustration *Barracks* in the 1930 *Arbeiterkalender*.²³⁶ As graphic director of the Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum (Museum for Society and Economy) from 1929 to 1932, Arntz worked on the Isotype picture language with Otto Neurath, philosopher of science and a member of Moritz Schlick's Vienna Circle.²³⁷ In his pursuit of promoting a scientific worldview, Neurath invented the Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics, which later became known as Isotype. It enabled him to visualize the dynamics of society rendered as objective results of

230
 Exh. cat. Budapest, Kassák,
 2011, pp. 38–39.

231
 Kassák, *munka*, 1930.

232
 Kassák, *munka*, 1931.

233
 Kassák, *munka*, 1934.

234
Sozialdemokrat, 1928, 3.

235
 Exh. cat. Vienna, Österr.
 Gesellschaft Kulturpolitik,
 Kälte, 1984.

236
 Luitpold, Jahr, 1930.

237
The Vienna Circle:
Exact Thinking in Demented Times,
 University of Vienna,
<https://www.univie.ac.at/AusstellungWienerKreis/der-wiener-kreis.html>
 [accessed on July 6, 2017].



238
Kassák, *Werdegang*,
1929, pp. 258–260.



Ex 35488
*1848 / Not everyone who
is buried is dead*, 1927
Woodcut for *munka* (1934),
PIM Budapest

Ex 19635
Chimneys, 1927
Woodcut, private collection

239
Kassák, *Reklame*, 1930, p. 237.

240
Rosenfeld, *Artiste*, 1929b, p. 7:
“Des cheminées surgissent, et dans
les plaines les gazomètres sont
comme accroupis, des tuyaux et
des squelettes d’acier s’entrecou-
pent en des formes fantastiques,
des navires descendent les fleuves.
La machine imprime son rythme
au monde nouveau, ce monde
d’aujourd’hui qui est celui du
capitalisme. Les pas des foules
en marche font résonner le rythme
de demain, qui serra la monde
socialiste.”

statistical analysis in a pictorial form readily understandable by the general public. Kassák was in touch with Austrian Social Democrats and published the autobiographical text *Ludwig Kassák: Der Werdegang eines Proletariers—Eine Selbstbiografie des Dichters*²³⁸ and the essay “Die Reklame”²³⁹ in the magazine *Kunst und Volk* published by Bach.

As mentioned earlier, an in-depth article by Rosenfeld, “Un artiste prolétaire—Otto-Rudolf Schatz,” was published in the French magazine *Monde*. The “weekly magazine for literary, arts, science, economics and societal information,” edited by Henri Barbusse, used three of Schatz’s woodcuts to illustrate the text: *Chimneys* – Ex 19635 ↑, *Factory on the River* – Ex 19638, and *Bridge Building* – Ex 19639. Members of the magazine’s governing board included Albert Einstein, Maxim Gorki, and Upton Sinclair; celebrated Modernist artists such as Frans Masereel, Käthe Kollwitz, George Grosz, Henri Matisse, Amedeo Modigliani, and Picasso contributed illustrations. Rosenfeld described Schatz as a New Objectivity artist who showed the modern environment as an expression of a new era: “Chimneys rise up, gasometers squat in the fields, pipes and steel skeletons interlace in fantastic forms, boats descend the rivers.”²⁴⁰ Rosenfeld saw Schatz’s work as a reflection of modern life: “The rhythm of machines, the rhythm of the masses in motion: that is the rhythm of the world of tomorrow that we are fighting for. Otto-Rudolf Schatz has carved this rhythm in wood.”²⁴¹

BOOK ILLUSTRATION

241
Ibid., “Rythme des machines, rythme
des masses en mouvement: voilà le
rythme du monde de demain, pour
lequel nous luttons. Ce rythme, Otto-
Rudolf Schatz l’a gravé sur du bois.”

242
Böck, *Menschen*, 1993, p. 146.

The social novel was a key category of books in Vienna’s new workers’ libraries and attracted considerable interest among readers. In 1929 and 1932, books by Jack London and Upton Sinclair were particularly popular, not least thanks to their attractive, modern illustrations by Schatz and others.²⁴² The Socialist Education Department guided the librarians of the workers’ libraries in their selection of books, with a view to creating a consistent cultural program that was distinct from the bourgeois heritage. In 1929/30 the Vienna publisher Der Strom released

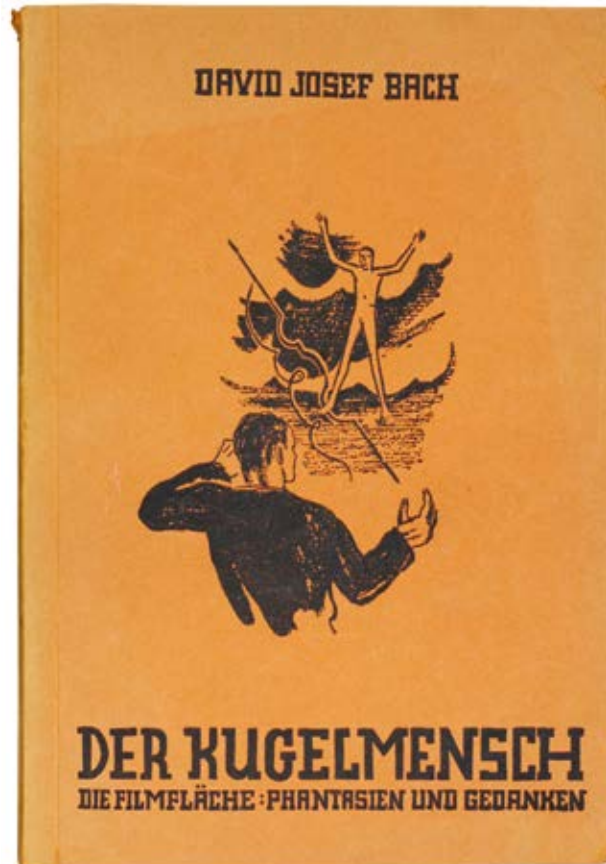


Ex 41511

Woodcut for Stefan Zweig's
Phantastische Nacht, 1929, private collection

Ex 32016

Cover of David Josef Bach's
Der Kugelmensch, 1938, Lithograph,
Literaturhaus Wien – Dokumentationsstelle
für neuere Österreichische Literatur



its Romanrundschau series, comprising well-known works in paperback format, illustrated with woodcuts by Schatz. The images served to break up the blocks of text and visualized the content using popular characters as identification figures, thereby making them more accessible to readers who were not used to literature. Examples included Stefan Zweig's *Phantastische Nacht* – Ex 41511 ↑, H. G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* – Ex 41158, Frank Heller's *Marco Polos Millionen* – Ex 32870, and a collection of short stories by Jack London entitled *Vagabunden* – Ex 32025. In Zweig's story, Schatz's portrayal of a Viennese horse-drawn carriage was so realistic and authentic that it was immediately recognized by the Viennese readership.²⁴³ One reviewer wrote:

“The Romanrundschau series, edited by Oskar Maurus Fontana, has announced forthcoming works by Schnitzler, Wassermann, London, Sinclair, and Meyrink [...]. [...] In the volume ‘Der Zwang’ (woodcuts by Frans Masereel and Otto Rudolf Schatz), Stephan Zweig combines a poetic war narrative, imbued with noble pacifism and the spirit of Romain Rolland, with the well-known short story ‘Phantastische Nacht’ from the collection ‘Amok.’ The third volume is H. G. Wells’ eerie novel ‘The Invisible Man,’ published several years ago.”²⁴⁴

²⁴³

See Daim, *Kunstabenteuer*, 1997, pp. 75–78.

²⁴⁴

F. R., *Büchern*, 1929.

²⁴⁵

Böck, *Neue Menschen*, 1993, p. 146; see also John Warren, “‘Weisse Strümpfe oder neue Kutteln,’ Cultural Decline in Vienna in the 1930s,” in Holmes/Silverman, *Vienna*, 2009, p. 37; Pfoser, *Literatur*, 1980.

After 1934, during the period of Austro-Fascism, all libraries were inspected. Fifty-two out of seventy-two were reopened, but without any works by London, Anton Kuh, Walter Mehrling, Kurt Tucholsky, Arthur Schnitzler, and Karl Kraus. The books by Émile Zola and Upton Sinclair were also removed.²⁴⁵

FESTIVALS AND POPULAR THEATER PRODUCTIONS

In January 1930 the first “Gschnasfest” (costume party) was held at the Hagenbund with the theme of “a Russian fair.”²⁴⁶ This and future events were features of a vibrant subculture outside the prevailing conservative-clerical line. The *Wiener Zeitung* wrote about the first costume party at the Hagenbund:

“With ‘Russian fair’ as its theme, the Hagenbund recently organized its first costume party, which was a spectacular success thanks to the highly accomplished decorations in all the rooms and the large number of guests. The middle room had been turned into a Russian village by the painters C. Hauser, R. Pajer-Gartegen, O. R. Schatz, F. A. Harta, and G. Mayer-Marton [...]. One of the side rooms was adorned with hilarious caricatures by Tibor Gergely and Georg Mayer-Marton; in another room Eduard Gärtner and Robert Kloss had painted figures of Russian peasants on the walls, whose faces had been replaced with mirrors. [...] The music was provided by a genuinely Russian band along with Korngold-Jazz, whose tunes entertained the boisterous crowd until the early hours of the morning.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶
Anon., Gschnasfest, 1930, p. 5.

²⁴⁷
Ibid.

²⁴⁸
Biography of Hans Robert Korngold, http://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00002616 [accessed on August 29, 2016].

²⁴⁹
Murray G. Hall, Österreichische Verlagsgeschichte, http://verlagsgeschichte.murrayhall.com/?page_id=180 [accessed on April 18, 2017].

²⁵⁰
Kotlan-Werner, Kunst, 1977, p. 97.

Hans Robert Korngold, the leader of the above-mentioned jazz band, was the brother of the composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold and played regularly at various Viennese establishments until the late 1930s, when jazz came to be racially stigmatized as “Negro music.” In 1938 both brothers escaped from the Nazi terror to the USA.²⁴⁸

Schatz continued to contribute many of his best woodcuts to the Sunday supplement of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, which also increasingly contained agitprop pages with poems by Ernst Fischer. He designed the cover for Bach’s *Der Kugelmensch: Die Filmfläche—Phantasien und Gedanken* Ex 32016 ←, the last work published by the Suschitzky brothers’ Anzenbruger Verlag before Bach fled from the Nazis in 1938.²⁴⁹ In this, Bach asserted his belief in the importance of film from the viewpoint of spatial perception, based on the model of Hermann von Helmholtz’s “silvered globes.”²⁵⁰ The cover shows an interpretation of this idea of the “New Man,” depicted in a surreal pictorial language as protagonists of the cinema screen. Bach saw art as a means of promoting human dignity “born of the never-to-be-denied reality of the mind.”²⁵¹

HANS TIETZE’S EXHIBITION “ART IN OUR TIME”

In the context of current debates about the fundamental purpose of museums, it is interesting to note how, as early as 1930, in the exhibition *Art in Our Time*, Tietze sought to enrich everyday life by integrating modern art using a holistic, systematic approach and by “overcoming aesthetics.”²⁵² In Schatz he saw a prototype for this endeavor. The exhibition took place at the Künstlerhaus from March to May 1930, organized by the Society for the Promotion of Modern Art in Vienna. Its fourth section, under the heading “The Social Idea,” presented one of

²⁵¹
Bach, Kugelmensch, p. 9.

²⁵²
Title of a talk by Tietze during the exhibition, exh. cat. Vienna, Künstlerhaus, Zeit, 1930, p. 3.



M 1929 2
Factory, 1929
 Oil, missing

M 1928 7
*Floridsdorfer Bridge
 and Gasometer, c. 1928*
 Oil on wood, private collection

M 1928 2
*Boiler Room in the
 Mautner-Markhof Brewery, 1928*
 Oil on wood, private collection

M 1928 3
*Boiler Room in the
 Mautner-Markhof Brewery, 1928*
 Oil on wood, private collection



Schatz's major works, *Factory*, 1929 – M 1929 2 ←, now missing. As if on a breakneck camera journey with dizzying angles, the viewer's gaze is drawn along a pipeline system into the inner workings of a factory. The impenetrable structure, with red steel pillars providing color highlights, seems like a monument to modern engineering. The extended concept of art as promoted by Tietze was illustrated in the references to sources outside the traditional fields of "fine" art. In a similar vein, Schatz's frame of reference included not only modern painting, such as Bortnyik's *Red Factory*, 1919, but also photography and film. The dynamic, extreme perspective recalled the rollercoaster scene in René Clair's film *Entr'acte*, 1924, while the utopian vantage point and accentuated light effects referenced the role of modern technology in Lang's film *Metropolis*, 1927. The factory, of which only a section is visible in the picture, was seen as a constructive universe seemingly functioning without any need for human intervention.²⁵³

In his political text *Gemeindepolitik und moderne Kunst*,²⁵⁴ written in 1927, Tietze made his case for contemporary art in response to the anti-Modernist sentiment in Vienna. After the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, he saw the promotion of art as an essential task of society. In alignment with the Social Democratic Art Council, Tietze sought to widen the audience for art and criticized the elitist and bourgeois esotericism in modern art: "This art is evidently the product of a bourgeois worldview that only allows for an extremely individualistic art available both materially and ideally to no more than a small, select group." Tietze spoke of an "art of the decadent bourgeois." He suspected that "the new mass sentiments that are changing the face of our time are also likely to produce new artistic forms, and perhaps these forms are already underway, perhaps they have already been born in the still incomprehensible works of young artists."²⁵⁵ For Tietze, one example of this art fighting "for a new intellectual basis" was the painting *Factory*, which visualized the dynamics of the new environment in the modern vocabulary of Constructivism and New Objectivity. Schatz, among others, was a representative of the new type of modern artist in the "center of internationality" that was the city of Vienna. In keeping with his holistic approach, Tietze also incorporated other manifestations of modern life in his exhibition of visual art, such as a carriage depot, A.E.G. generators, and a building by Le Corbusier.²⁵⁶ Pursuing a didactic concept, he dedicated the first section to "painting in the critical year 1910/II." The second, "the formal language of our time beyond the realm of visual arts," included mass-produced items like a hairdryer and a vacuum cleaner. Also presented were "art photographs" by Albert Renger-Patzsch and a "modern approach to the depiction of statistics from the Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum Vienna," founded in 1925 by Otto Neurath.²⁵⁷ The third section showed "Three eras 1890–1910–1930," in which Tietze sought to present "the face of the times."²⁵⁸ The theme of the fourth section was "the social idea," which the modern artist, as a member of human society, was to address in a personal statement for the suppressed. Uitz's vision of society in the picture *Humanity*, 1920, which had been in a private collection in Vienna since the Freie Bewegung exhibition in 1919, was shown here, along with Schatz's painting *Factory*, 1929, and a woodcut from the *Mining* series, as well as works by Kollwitz, Grosz, and Otto Dix.²⁵⁹ The fifth section was devoted to the "depiction of the environment" and the sixth to "the supernatural." Not only in Schatz's graphic works shown in the exhibition but also his paintings, the theme of industry and technology – M 1928 2 ←, M 1928 3 ←, M 1928 7 ← was at least as important as his depictions of people. In his woodcuts he used visual components of factories like templates, which he assembled according to Constructivist principles into impressive compositions – Ex 34837 → →.

253

See Cornelia Cabuk, "Magische Sachlichkeit in Wien und Österreich," in exh. cat. Vienna, Belvedere, Wien–Berlin, 2013, pp. 346–47.

254

Tietze, *Gemeindepolitik*, 1927, p. 373.

255

Ibid., p. 377.

256

Exh. cat. Vienna, Künstlerhaus, Kunst, 1930, illustrations.

257

Ibid., p. 31, no. 63.

258

Hans Tietze, "Drei Zeiten," in ibid., p. 51.

259

Exh. cat. Vienna, Künstlerhaus, Kunst, 1930, cat. 9 and 28.



THE IMAGE OF THE MODERN WOMAN

The modern, emancipated woman with short, bobbed hair—a popular motif in New Objectivity art—also featured highly in Schatz’s work, as an expression of a new era of social and sexual liberation. Schatz preferred everyday subjects, as in *Kneeling Woman*, 1930 – M 1930 2 ↑, showing a young woman with a washbasin and mirror, performing her morning toilette. The strong, empowered woman of Austro-Marxism influenced his worldview, as in the now-missing painting *The Balcony*, 1930 – Ex 39449 (p. 56), a seminal work of New Objectivity, in which he deliberately draws attention to this new generation of women. The corpulent elderly matron darning socks with a young child standing beside her is contrasted with two fashionably dressed, no doubt working young women. This reflection on the life trajectories of working-class women flew in the face of both the Catholic and the Nazi ideal of motherhood. For the center of interest in this painting was the future generation, represented by the little girl. Key characteristics in his interpretation were the subtle materiality of Schatz’s fine painterly style combined with the unadorned representation of nudity, as in the figure of the kneeling woman. Furthermore, the seemingly mundane, unembellished posture of the naked woman, like a photographic sequence of movements, has a certain “natural” grace on account of the finely silhouetted lines. The transparent shawl, the stockings on the back of the chair, and the surface of the water in the washbasin in the original version,²⁶⁰ like the silk stockings held by the woman on the balcony, bear witness to the importance Schatz attached to the painterly interpretation of this subject, making him a singular and versatile portrayer of the image of modern woman during his time.

260
Kraft/Boeckl, Schatz, 2010, p. 33.

M 1930 2

Kneeling Woman, 1930
Oil on canvas,
Photograph,
Private collection

M 1930 2

Kneeling Woman, 1930
Oil on wood,
Wien Museum



Ex 34837

Nitric Acid Plant, 1927
Woodcut, private collection

Ex 35126

Workers, 1931
Woodcut in
Kunst und Volk,
Vienna City Library

Ex 34920

Flags, 1931
Woodcut in
Kunst und Volk,
Vienna City Library

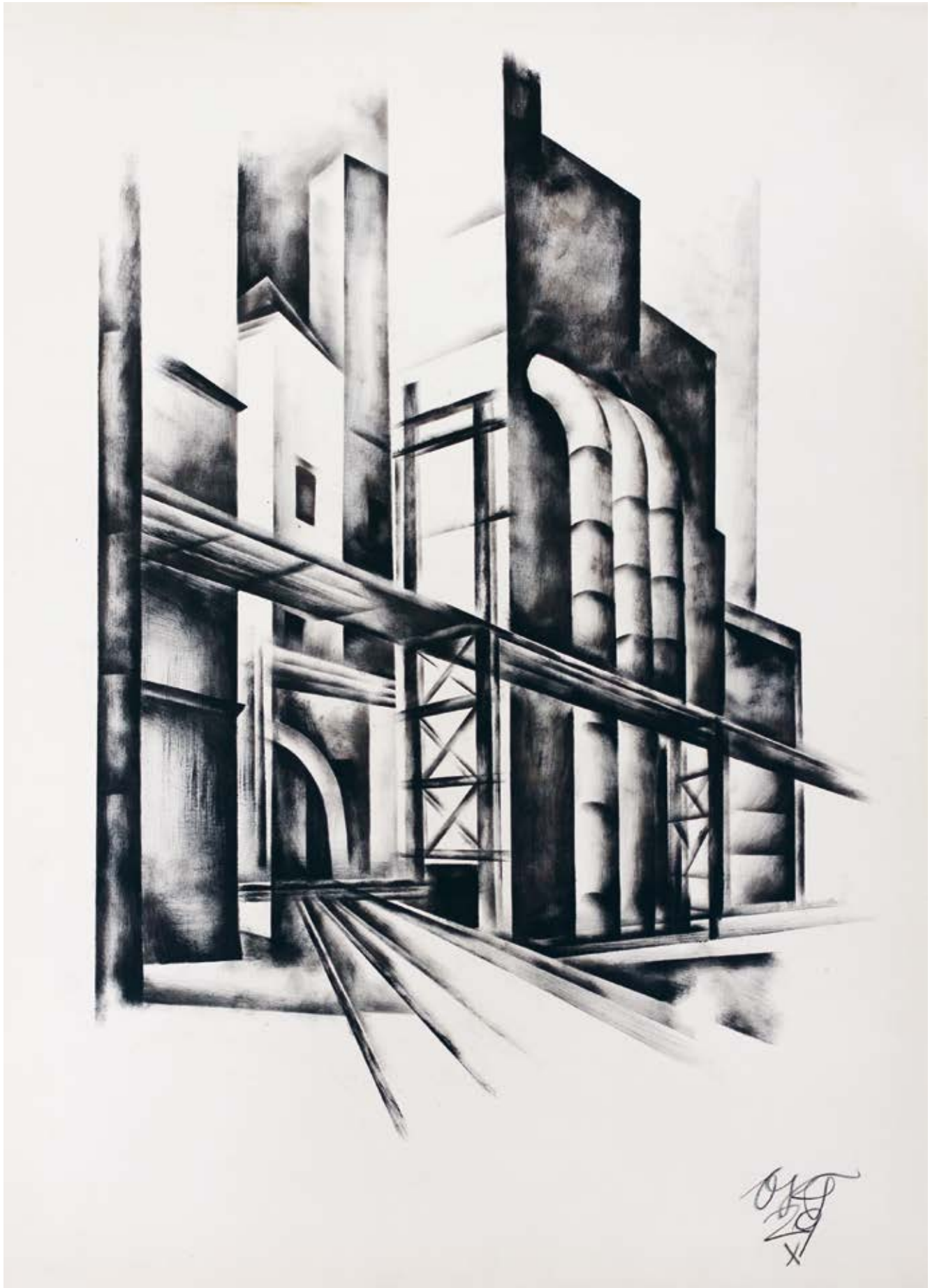
THE GEOMETRIC-CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAL

With a view to creating a universally understood form of Modernism, Schatz also espoused a Constructivist figurative style, as exemplified by two graphic works for the magazine *Kunst und Volk*. The woodcut *Workers*, 1931 – Ex 35126 ↑ was published in the same year at the start of the text “Der Lindbergh-Flug” by Brecht.²⁶¹ The second illustration, *Flags*, also 1931 – Ex 34920 ↑, accompanied an article by Bach entitled “Sozialismus und Kunst.”²⁶² In the same magazine, in 1928, the painter and writer Kassák had published his “notes on a new operative aesthetic for publicity posters as an ‘active social factor’” in the “competition among posters” and against the “passive aestheticism of subjective art” and typography,²⁶³ as well

²⁶¹
Brecht, Lindbergh, 1931, p. 47.

²⁶²
Bach, Sozialismus, 1931, p. 93.

²⁶³
Kassák, Reklame, 1930.



Ex 5902

Factory, 1929
Printer's ink on paper,
Private collection

Ex 41703

The Red City,
Printer's ink, whereabouts unknown,
illustration for the May Day supplement
of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, May 1, 1929,
ANNO / Austrian National Library

Ex 36566

Cover of the special edition
of *Die Neue Stadt*, 1930
Gouache on board, private collection



as his autobiographical essay “Der Werdegang eines Proletariers.”²⁶⁴ Using a special technique, Schatz drew Constructivist-inspired black-and-white architectural fantasies in printer's ink. In doing so, he achieved a high degree of formal precision, while at the same time adapting the documentary character of black-and-white photography and print media. With this remarkable series, he made a significant contribution to the acceptance of geometric abstraction in Vienna, which had burgeoned in the wake of De Stijl and Constructivism trends, following Kiesler's *International Exhibition of New Theater Technology*—as, for example, in Leischner's buildings.²⁶⁵ Dieter Bogner described this creative atmosphere of the interwar years as follows: “Even if the events in Vienna and the achievements of the artists here did not quite attain the same historical status as the Berlin, Paris, or Weimar avant-garde, the overall cultural environment was considerably more vibrant and creative than it has often been presented.”²⁶⁶ The drawings *City*, 1926 – Ex 35347 – for the *Arbeiterkalender*,²⁶⁷ *The Red City*, 1929 – Ex 41703 ↑ for the May Day supplement of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*,²⁶⁸ the cover drawing for the luxury edition of *Die Neue Stadt* dedicated to Schacherl – Ex 36566 ↑ or *Factory*, 1929 – Ex 5902 ← were all products of this vibrancy and represent highlights of the geometric precision of constructive objectivity.

The Hagenbund costume party in 1931 once again attracted media attention. Ankiewicz-Kleehoven wrote in the *Wiener Zeitung*:

“While last year's first Hagenbund party had a Russian fair as its setting, this year's costume party by the Hagen artists' association, which took place on May 17 at the Zedlitzhalle, had an Oriental theme, inviting its guests to the court of the ‘Mad Maharajah.’ [...] A frieze decorating the walls of the main room depicted an Indian festive procession joined by a group of Viennese art critics high on horseback, delightfully caricatured by the painter Gergely. The frieze was painted jointly by the artists Kloss und Gärtner, with two lifelike representations by O. R. Schatz. The three aforementioned painters were also responsible for decorating the entrance area. [...] The next room was transformed by the sculptor Professor K. Stemolák and the painter O. R. Schatz into an Indian temple,

264

Kassak, Werdegang, 1929, p. 258;
20er Jahre. Ein Epochenprofil.
Österreichische Kultur und Literatur
der 20er Jahre,
URL: [http://litkult1920er.aau.at/](http://litkult1920er.aau.at/?q=content/kunst-und-volk)
[?q=content/kunst-und-volk](http://litkult1920er.aau.at/?q=content/kunst-und-volk)
[accessed on September 21, 2016].

265

Bogner, Vienna, 1983.

266

Ibid., p. 48.

267

As a lithograph; Luitpold,
Arbeiterkalender, 1927, p. 56.

268

Maibeilage, 1929, p. 17.



Ex 41521

*The Painter O. R. Schatz Declares Bankruptcy, 1931,
Woodcut, private collection*

Ex 40660

*The Past Emerges from the Graves, 1932
Pen in Indian ink on paper, whereabouts unknown*



where a soothing half-light prevailed that was welcomed by many [...]. The setting continued with a tropical jungle, which Schatz had populated with scantily dressed exotic women.”²⁶⁹

Schatz’s international profile was raised by the *Salon International du livre d’art* book fair at the Petit Palais des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris in 1931. Under the theme of “Gloire et destin du livre,” the exhibition presented an international cross-section of art books, including publications by the Avalun Verlag.²⁷⁰

ART AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

In the 1930s, Schatz gradually lost his livelihood because of a lack of sales. For one thing, “Red Vienna” was in dire straits and eventually, in 1934, the Social Democratic Party was banned. Moreover, the art market had collapsed following the stock market crash and subsequent economic crisis, and the Hagenbund was selling very little. To draw public attention to the plight of artists, the following news item appeared in the daily papers: “Bankruptcy order against the arts: yesterday an artist declared himself bankrupt.”²⁷¹ In an appeal for solidarity, Schatz sent a notice with a woodcut design to artist, architect, and painter colleagues, inviting them to his bankruptcy proceedings – Ex 41521 ↑. On October 13, 1931, the bankrupt artist made an oath of insolvency before the bankruptcy court. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* suspected that the nature of his art was to blame for his situation:

“Yesterday an artist declared insolvency. The artist Otto Rudolf Schatz was summoned by Vienna Bankruptcy Court I on account of his unpaid telephone bill; Schatz in turn invited his friends to attend the hearing. A large group of artists thus congregated [...] at the bankruptcy court. Schatz is one of the most talented and

²⁶⁹

Ankwicz-Kleehoven,
Faschingsnachrichten, 1931.

²⁷⁰

Matejka, *Künstler*, 1947, n. p.

²⁷¹

Anon., *Tagesneuigkeiten*, 1931.

distinctive young artists in Austria; that is his undoing—if he were conventional and mediocre, he would have been sure to find an ‘authoritative instance’ to lend a helping hand from time to time. Since Schatz is an original, his pictures do not sell but are still taxed [...]. The state has money for [...] racehorses, armored vehicles, steel helmets, and bayonets—but for art it has only tax authorities and the bankruptcy court.”²⁷²

On the occasion of a visit to Schatz’s studio, Roden wrote in the *Volkszeitung* under the title “ORS is in the news” about Schatz’s vast œuvre and tireless work:

“[...] because he rarely exhibits, even though he has been a member of the Hagenbund artists’ association for several years, and so one has to visit him in his studio, where his works are piling up—and not only because it is becoming increasingly difficult to find enough buyers, but also because Schatz, undeterred by the whole dire situation and in spite of all the tribulations of the last few years, continues to work incessantly and thus keeps adding to his œuvre. [...] Visitors can admire more than thirty paintings, around two hundred watercolors and drawings, and some four hundred wood blocks, which Schatz, one of the most outstanding woodcutters in Austria and Germany, has amassed; at least as many blocks again have been destroyed by him or the publishers after one use, in line with contractual requirements.”²⁷³

272
Ibid.

273
Roden, *Bildwerke*, 1931.

274
Anon., *Theater*, 1932;
exh. cat. Vienna, Belvedere,
Hagenbund, 2014, pp. 229–30.

275
Ibid., p. 229.

In the end, Schatz was able to sell some works thanks to a new auction-type system Nirenstein had introduced at the Hagenbund. He participated in its *Modern Austrian Painting* exhibition from December 1931 to January 1932. As the *Wiener Zeitung* reported on January 6, alongside works by Schatz, works by Georg Ehrlich, Gerhard Frankl, F. A. Harta, Oskar Kokoschka, Anton Kolig, Oskar Laske, and Franz Lerch were also sold.²⁷⁴ While Kokoschka had opposed this sales system, in which the public determined the prices, other artists, whose livelihood depended on selling works, had no choice but to accept it.²⁷⁵

POLITICAL SATIRE

276
Anon., *Schulung*, 1933;
Anon., *Vereine*, 1932.

277
Bühne 1932.

278
Luitpold, *Kabarett*, 1933.

279
There was no catalogue;
exh. cat. Vienna, Belvedere,
Hagenbund, 2014, p. 232.

In 1932/33, Schatz worked as an adult education teacher, offering graphic art classes for librarians through the Vienna sub-committee of the Workers’ Education Department, among other things on the subject of “graphic art in propaganda.”²⁷⁶ In 1932, Ehrenzweig was editor of the magazine *Die Politische Bühne*, for which Schatz drew the cover picture *The Past Emerges from the Graves – Ex 40660*.²⁷⁷ It shows two decorated generals, one with a spiked helmet and the other with a lorgnette, emerging undead from their coffins. The drawing’s acerbic humor was comparable to works by Grosz and mirrored the satirical tone of the *Politisches Kabarett*, to which the Austrian writer Jura Soyfer contributed and which Josef Luitpold described in 1933 as “the insolent child of a foundering era.”²⁷⁸

In November 1932, the 65th Hagenbund exhibition featured Schatz’s graphic works together with a collection by Georg Ehrlich.²⁷⁹ The 66th



M 1929 1

Landscape near Langenzersdorf, 1929
Oil on canvas, private collection

M 1934 2

Winter near Langenzersdorf, c. 1934,
Oil on board, private collection,
courtesy of
Kunsthandel Widder, Vienna

M 1934 1

Schloss Orth am Traunsee, 1934
Oil on canvas, private collection,
courtesy of Galerie Heinze, Salzburg

M 1931 5

Evening Landscape, 1931
Tempera grassa on paper, private
collection

M 1940 19

Mönichkirchen, c. 1940
Oil on canvas, private collection

Ex 41649

Otto Rudolf Schatz and Franz Senkinc,
The Last of the Bittner Family, 1934
Collage, watercolor and pen in Indian
ink, double page in Franz Schacherl's
visitors' book, private collection

Hagenbund exhibition in April 1933 included a representative cross-section of Schatz's paintings, with major works like *Balloon Seller*, *Prater Stand*, and *Bathers*. A further opportunity for the impoverished artist to sell his work was offered by the Christmas exhibition in December 1933 at the studio of his friends Leo Rosmer and Franz Senkinc, to which he contributed oil paintings, watercolors, and graphic works.²⁸⁰ The atmosphere of paralysis that pervades his winter landscapes of the 1930s aptly expresses the mood of the times – M 1929 1 ←, M 1934 2 ←, M 1934 1 ←, M 1940 19 ←, M 1940 21.

RESISTANCE AND EXILE 1934–1945

ESCAPE FROM VIENNA IN 1934 AND YEARS OF TRAVEL— FRANZ SCHACHERL'S VISITORS' BOOKS

Until 1934, Schatz lived at Drorygasse 8 in the 3rd district and then, until 1938, at Karmeliterplatz 1 in the 2nd district.²⁸¹ As a supporter of the Socialists, his situation became precarious in the aftermath of the 1934 civil war, with the Social Democratic Party banned and its Art Council dissolved. In Franz Schacherl's visitors' books from 1934 to 1937, he and his friends Schatz, Senkinc, and Karl Wiener kept notes on the events of the time.²⁸² As a collaborative work, these books bear witness to the spirited, creative dialogue among artists, who took inspiration from one another and gave free rein to their sardonic sense of humor. It was an artistic outlet at a time when bans, suppression, and unemployment were the order of the day. The variety of media used, from pencil drawings to collage and photomontage—often in absurd combination as a conversation across two facing pages—showed their familiarity with the increasingly pilloried Modernism, from Dadaism to Surrealism. For example, in a reversal of the prominent New Objectivity theme of the murdered woman, Schatz and Senkinc produced an equivalent collage and drawing of a murdered man – Ex 41649 ←. In 1934, Schatz also drew an anonymous victim of the civil war sparsely covered with newspaper.

Along with Josef Luitpold and others, Schatz initially left Vienna and lived on and off in Brno. During that period he devoted himself to politically innocuous landscape painting. He visited the Salzkammergut, where he also met Leischner – Ex 40695. In December 1934, his financial situation improved overnight as a result of his marriage to Valerie Wittal,²⁸³ who came from a wealthy Austrian-Jewish family in Brno, where her father, Johann Wittal, owned a large department store. In Leischner's 1934 sketchbook, Schatz described the warm welcome he received from his wife's family in a humorous drawing about his changed status, a self-portrait in Jewish costume, captioned: "The new wonder rabbi ORS na Brno." – Ex 40697 → →.

Matejka says of this period: "It would be wrong to assume, however, that Schatz devoted himself exclusively to politics. It is true that he was and

280
1st district, Franz-Josef-Kai 27;
anon., Weihnachtsausstellung,
1933.

281
KZ-Verband, sworn affidavit,
DOEW.

282
Günter Eisenhut in exh. cat. Graz,
Moderne, 2001, pp. 62, 321, 385.

283
Valerie Wittal, born July 2, 1903,
in Brünn (Brno);
Encyklopedie dejin města Brna,
http://encyklopedie.brna.cz/home-mmmb/?acc=profil_osobnosti&load=18169
[accessed on August 16, 2017].





Ex 40697

Wonder Rabbi, 1934

Pencil, Franz Leischner's sketchbook, private collection

M 1935 5

Boat Harbor, c. 1935, oil on canvas, private collection



M 1935 4

Chapel on the Coast near Dubrovnik,

c. 1935, oil on canvas,

Private collection

284

Matejka, Künstler, 1947, n. p.

285

ANG 467.

286

A small theater with forty-nine seats, letter from Otto Kallir-Nirenstein to Elias Jubal, July 27, 1935, ANG 256 / 1-12.

287

Newspaper review, *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, February 14, 1936, ANG 470/1.

288

Letter from Otto Rudolf Schatz to Otto Kallir-Nirenstein, n. d. [1936], ANG, Künstlerkorrespondenz 283/3.

289

W.D., Kunstaussstellung, 1936; ANG, 470/3.

290

The 1908 play of the same name was written by Maurice Maeterlinck.

291

Barbara Lesák, "Russische Theaterkunst 1910-1936," in exh. cat. Vienna, Theatermuseum, Theaterkunst, 1993, p. 85.

is a socialist. He remained so even in the bitter years of marginalization after 1934 and despite all enforced conformity after 1938. [...] Schatz saw the disaster looming long before Austria fell victim to its own and the German Nazis."²⁸⁴ In November 1935, he participated in an exhibition at the Neue Galerie on the theme of "Salzburg and the Salzkammergut," together with Oskar Laske, Franz Lerch, Adolf Winternitz, and Fritz Zerboni.²⁸⁵ In the summer, Kallir-Nirenstein had already organized a Schatz exhibition at Theater der 49, following a suggestion by the Galician-Jewish director and inventor of the basement theater Elias Jubal.²⁸⁶ This first basement theater in Vienna, founded in 1928 at Hotel de France on Schottenring, showed watercolors by Schatz with views of the Aussee lake.

From 1935 to 1937, Schatz and his wife traveled extensively through Europe, particularly the Mediterranean regions of Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, and Tunisia – M 1935 5 ↑, M 1935 6 – and also to Switzerland. His paintings of coastal landscapes from this time have an ambivalent mood, enchanting and threatening at the same time, the peculiar atmosphere of their magic realism impressively capturing the feeling of the time – M 1935 4 ←, M 1932 2, Ex 30365, Ex 6005.

In early 1936, Kallir-Nirenstein organized a Schatz exhibition at the Neue Galerie, together with Georg Ehrlich.²⁸⁷ Kallir-Nirenstein had financed Schatz's stay in the Salzkammergut.²⁸⁸ The artist submitted landscapes and watercolors to the exhibition. The titles of the works give an indication of his travels after 1934. They included pictures from Salzburg, like *St. Peter's Cemetery*, *Horse Pond*, *Salzburg Cathedral*, as well as other places in the Salzkammergut, such as *Palais Porcia in Spittal an der Drau*, *St. Gilgen in the Snow*, *Evening on Wolfgangsee Lake*, pictures from Ischl, *Industrial Port*, "sultry Prague light,"²⁸⁹ and *St. Nicholas' Church, On the Vltava*, an evening picture of the play *Der blaue Vogel*²⁹⁰ – Ex 5941 →, M 1936 5 →, Ex 39227. *Der blaue Vogel*, a Russian-German émigré cabaret in Berlin, had already made a guest appearance at the Kammerspiele in Vienna in 1922. In its performances it showed vignettes from life in Russia. In 1936, *Der blaue Vogel* under director J. Jushny had a guest performance at the Schönbrunn Summer Arena in Weigls Dreherpark, which Schatz recorded in one of his works.²⁹¹ Variety



Ex 5941

Open-Air Theater, 1930,
watercolor on paper, private collection

M 1936 5

St. Nicolas Church in Prague, 1936, oil on canvas,
Galerie Heinze, Salzburg



shows and circus performances had been held at Schönbrunnerstrasse 307 since 1894.²⁹² In an article in the *Volkszeitung* about Schatz's watercolor landscapes, Roden wrote:

“For the first time on this scale, an exhibition of watercolors by the Hagenbund artist Otto Rudolf Schatz is being shown at the Neue Galerie at Grünangergasse 1; landscapes, mostly from the Salzkammergut, which he painted last summer. In all the years in which Schatz has purposefully pursued his own independent path, he has always drawn inspiration from his own originality; but he has also absorbed as much of the daily experience of the visual arts as possible. The first impression is of an artist who continuously changes direction and aspires to new goals; on closer inspection, however, he shows a consistent essence, a solid artistic character, an unchanged artistic temperament. Every phase of his highly energized life—and here we penetrate into the depths of his natural and self-assured manner—reveals the readiness, the strength of will, and, above all, the ability to address the problems and demands of the time. In September 1924—and in the ‘development,’ the rapid succession of art movements, this date seems much more than eleven or twelve years ago—when Schatz had his first major exhibition in the very same Neue Galerie where he is now displaying his burgeoning maturity, he was fully committed to Expressionism. Flaming reds and blazing yellows abounded—even years later the eyes still smart from their heat—and crepuscular violets and greens surged in the depths. The loudness is more muted now, the gloomy tones brighter—although still encountered now and then—the palette is more refined, if we may call it so, more consummate, the planar structure, or illusion of three-dimensionality, benefiting from the experience of Objectivity, has become more disciplined, calmer. [...] Mention may be made of the tonality in ‘Industrial Port,’ the spatial effect in ‘Traunkirchen,’ the layering

292

URL: [https://www.wien.gv.at/wiki/index.php/Dreherpark_\(12\)](https://www.wien.gv.at/wiki/index.php/Dreherpark_(12))
[accessed on August 19, 2016].



Ex 30332

Industrial Port, c. 1936

Watercolor on paper, private collection



M 1936 6

New York, East River, 1936/37, Oil on canvas, private collection

(compositional and in coloring) of ‘Near St. Gilgen.’ These three examples are a threefold encouragement to look closely and intently at what Schatz has to offer.”²⁹³ – **M 1936 1**, **Ex 30332** ↑, **Ex 30337**.

In May 1936, works by Schatz were shown at the Bukum Kunstgalerie Hugo Heller on Bauernmarkt.²⁹⁴ This book, art, and music store went into liquidation the following year and came under new ownership. Since 1902, Heller, who had died in 1923, had been a member of the Wednesday Psychological Society, where Sigmund Freud delivered talks, and was also a friend of Arthur Schnitzler. He had organized exhibitions of works by Max Klinger, Klimt, Kollwitz, and Oppenheimer, and in 1910 also paintings by Arnold Schönberg and others.²⁹⁵

NEW YORK 1936 – WORLD’S FAIR IN PARIS 1937

Possibly with a view to emigrating from an increasingly fascist Europe, Schatz and his wife traveled to New York in 1936 and returned to Vienna via London and Paris in 1937 – **M 1936 6** ↑.

293

Roden, Landschaftsaquarelle,
1936, ANG 470/4

294

Anzeige Kunstausstellungen, 1936.

295

Fuchs, Heller, 2004, p. 86.

296

Viktor Matejka, “Der Maler O. R.
Schatz,” in Rosegger, 1947, n. p.

Matejka wrote in 1947:

“[...] 1936/37 in America, from where he brought back some of his finest pictures, images that enchant the world of skyscrapers without undermining their essence; here he just gained an even stronger sense of the storm brewing in Europe. In contrast to his American friends, who did not see Hitler as a threat to peace, he could clearly feel the coming of the war and foresaw only bad and difficult times for himself and, in particular, for his wife and her family, who were Jewish.”²⁹⁶



M 1937 8

Paris, 1937, Oil on canvas, private collection,
courtesy of Kunsthandel Widder, Vienna

Ex 13317

Paris, World's Fair, 1937
Watercolor on paper, private collection

In Paris the couple visited the World's Fair – **M 1937 8** ↑; one obituary states that Schatz won the Grand Prix for his *Apocalypse* woodcut series.²⁹⁷ A watercolor painted by Schatz on site at the World's Fair shows a realistic view of the entire site as seen from the Trocadéro. From this perspective, Schatz was able to make the German pavilion by Albert Speer look small, and not at all as monumental as was generally reported – **Ex 13317** ↑. Another watercolor shows the Peace Pavilion on the Trocadéro – **Ex 16746** →, part of the *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, where pacifists gathered every night.²⁹⁸ The Peace Pavilion, built by Austrian, Belgian, and British artists, together with French architects, was opened on July 9, 1937, by the International Peace Campaign.²⁹⁹ Schatz showed its column base in green and gold, inscribed with the word PAX in two-meter-high letters.

He described his impression of New York to a reviewer:

“I had imagined New York to be a gray jumble of stone and concrete, but I found a multicolored dream! The skyscrapers are made of the most beautiful, high-quality materials: limestone and marble—and even the brick buildings seem noble and clean in their colorful appearance.”³⁰⁰

The critic thereafter described the picture series from New York, which Kallir-Nirenstein exhibited at the Neue Galerie in 1937, as the “diary notes of a fervent admirer.”³⁰¹

Using a Modernist style vocabulary, Schatz painted large-format views of New York, such as *East Side, Manhattan*, 1937 – **M 1936 20** →, **M 1936 18** →, in which he interpreted Manhattan emblematically as an urban utopia. To render his impression of the metropolis in painting he abandoned the meticulous realistic detail of New Objectivity in favor of the cosmopolitan pictorial language of Modernism, combining elements of Cubism, Constructivism, and abstract art in pronounced chromaticity. Just like Wilhelm Thöny's New York views, shown in 1937 at Würthle's gallery, Schatz's images of Manhattan, too, in their sequentially proportioned vertical elements, featured aspects of geometric abstraction. For

297
Smerda, Schatz, 1961, p. 107.

298
URL: <https://www.architecture.com/image-library/ribapix/image-information/poster/peace-pavilion-exposition-internationale-des-arts-et-techniques-dans-la-vie-moderne-paris-1937/posterid/RIBA52159.html> [accessed on August 9, 2017].

299
Peace Pavillon during a time of war, International Institut of social History, URL: <https://socialhistory.org/en/today/peace-pavilion-during-time-war?language=en> [accessed on August 9, 2017].

300
Quoted in W. B., Künstler, 1937, n. p., ANG 483.

301
Ibid.



Ex 16746

Peace Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair, 1937
Watercolor on paper, Galerie Altstadt, Krems



Ex 5985

Paris, Montmartre and Sacre cœur, 1937
Watercolor on paper, private collection



M 1936 18

Otto Rudolf Schatz in front of the painting "From the Brooklyn Bridge, Manhattan, New York," 1937 in the Artists' Gallery, photograph, NLORS

M 1936 20

East Side, Manhattan, New York, 1936/37
Oil on canvas, private collection

both of these Austrians, New York appeared as a place of freedom and a locus of Modernism. Thöny's painting *New York, East River*, 1936,³⁰² with its reduced color scale of white, black, and red on a blue background, presents the vision of a weightless mirage. Schatz, as a keen observer of urban development in Vienna, showed a more ambivalent picture of the metropolis as a dazzling agglomeration of skyscrapers and deep, dark urban canyons. The pictures of both artists are almost completely devoid of people, which in Schatz's case could be understood as an allusion to the reverse side of the city's glamorous exterior. A comparable concept of the city as an expression of social hierarchy characterizes Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*, which contrasts the futuristic metropolis with the gloomy habitations of the working classes.

One point of contact for Austrians in New York was the Artists' Gallery, founded in 1936 by the Harvard graduate Hugh Stix, where Schatz exhibited some of the paintings he produced during his stay. Stix had opened the gallery at

302

Exh. cat. Graz, Neue Galerie, Thöny, 2013, WV 368, plate 212.



M 1936 11

*Hotel Parc Vendome, New York, 1936/37,
Oil on canvas, private collection*

M 1936 10

*New York, Hudson, 1936/37
Oil on canvas, private collection*

M 1936 19

*Central Park, New York, 1936/37
Oil on canvas, private collection*

M 1936 9

*New York, 1936/37
Oil on canvas, private collection*

Ex 5961

*Fifth Avenue, New York, 1936/37
Watercolor on paper, private collection*



Ex 35167

*48th Street with Rockefeller Center/
Radio City, 1936/37, watercolor,
MUSA – Museum auf Abruf Wien*



the instigation of the Austrian painter Hans Böhler with an exhibition of the artist's work. The gallery operated as a non-profit business modeled on the Vienna Secession and was run for years by Böhler's partner Friederike Beer-Monti.³⁰³ The most renowned artists promoted by the gallery were Josef Albers, William de Kooning, and Louise Nevelson.

In the exhibition *New York: Travel Pictures by Otto Rudolf Schatz* at the Neue Galerie in April 1937, Kallir-Nirenstein showed a large selection of Schatz's paintings, watercolors, and woodcuts from New York. The exhibition was reviewed in a number of daily newspapers. On the strength of these reports, had history willed otherwise, Schatz could have become one of the most highly regarded artists in Austria – M 1936 11 ←, M 1936 10 ←, M 1936 19 ←, M 1936 9 ←, Ex 5961 ←, Ex 35167 ←.

Roden wrote an article entitled "Fantastic skyscraper landscape: New York impressions by Schatz," which also mentioned the Thöny exhibition:

"Paintings, watercolors, and woodcuts, which Otto Rudolf Schatz, one of our best Hagenbund artists and altogether one of the most estimable Viennese painters, brought back from a winter journey to the United States, [...] are on show at the Neue Galerie in Grünangergasse. 'New York impressions' would be the right way to describe them, if we were not also confronted by very deliberate and emphatic 'expressions.' The accentuation of emotion, his surging and soaring imagination, is most palpable in these visions of form and color created by an unparalleled painterly temperament. [...] / The exhibition at the Neue Galerie, very interesting in itself, loses nothing—in fact even gains in fascination—from recalling another recent exhibition, in which Thöny presented his perception of New York. Both artists are at once close to and yet far removed from reality. Schatz is considerably more focused, however. He cannot be otherwise, not even when his contours become blurred in the wintry, misty, gloomy atmosphere, and the urban colossus disappears in the twilight. He links things in his own way and processes what he sees directly from his inner vision. [...]. And this gives his highly articulate report from his trip to New York a great contextual richness, which is also apparent from the fact that the same theme and sometimes the same motif are presented in such diverse and delightful forms. We are confronted with a towering urban realm, a strange urban massif, an unfamiliar and unexpected New York, and we enjoy an experience that we can never lose again. / Once again, Schatz has departed some way from his earlier path of solid Objectivity—quite a long way. Yet, once again, this is not a straying, but a departure arising from an inner necessity. The more relaxed manner in his paintings and watercolors is due not only to a different formal sensitivity but also without a doubt to the continually practiced technical control. Schatz, who has considerable experience in a wide range of painting and graphic techniques, is clearly a wholehearted painter; he enjoys the medium of paint. His versatility is evident in a comparison of the different pictures: 'New York, Harbor,' 'Middle Town' (how well he controls the large area), 'View of the Bronx,' 'Hotel Parc Vendome,' 'Broadway, Upper End,' 'Bridge Entrance,' 'Central Park.' I could continue this list. These are

303
Artists' Gallery Records,
URL: <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/artists-gallery-records-9555>
[accessed on October 8, 2017].

just a few of the sixty or so records of a vibrant city made by a vibrant personality.”³⁰⁴

The daily newspaper *Die Stunde* reported the following:

“The Neue Galerie is showing the New York travel pictures of the painter R. O. Schatz. It is strange to walk down our quiet little streets, Grünangergasse, Domgasse, to climb up an ancient Viennese staircase, to open the door—and to then suddenly stare at skyscrapers, an explosion, an eruption of skyscrapers [...]; for nothing else interested this artist in New York, not the automobiles, not the people, at best a couple of bridges, which are really just like skyscrapers on their side. The pictures have a fairy-tale and completely improbable aspect [...]; the man has the most dispassionate eye [...]. When I walked around the gallery it was, undeservedly, almost empty; and in a window niche stood a young man trying to look disinterested, no doubt the artist himself [...].”³⁰⁵

The *Neue Freie Presse* wrote:

“The painter Schatz was a student of Tessenow and Strnad; his work is familiar from the Hagenbund exhibitions. He has now spent a few months in New York, where he completed a series of surprisingly fresh [...] oil paintings, watercolors, and woodcuts. On his journey, this witty observer reveals all of his artistic talents [...]. The most successful pictures are watercolors, like ‘Madison Square,’ which brilliantly captures the life of the city, and ‘View from the Fire Escape.’ But ‘Canadian Apples,’ ‘Sixth Avenue,’ and ‘Manhattan Bridge, Entrance’ are also delightfully airy and light. Among the oil paintings, whose broad brushstrokes and occasional palette knife application powerfully evoke the colors of the capital of the United States, mention might also be made of ‘Fifth Avenue from the Rockefeller Center,’ ‘Middle Town,’ ‘Central Park,’ ‘Halifax Harbor,’ ‘Bridge Entrance,’ and ‘Highway.’ The trip was a complete artistic success.”³⁰⁶

304
Volkszeitung, April 25, 1937,
Künstlerarchiv Belvedere,
estate of Ankwicz-Kleehoven;
ANG 483/9–10.

305
Anon., “Neue Galerie,”
in *Die Stunde*, May 1, 1937,
ANG 483/9–10.

306
W. D., *Kunstaussstellung*, 1937, p. 12.

307
Exh. cat. Brussels, Société,
Salon, 1937; exh. cat. Vienna,
Hagenbund, 74, 1937.

308
Ankwicz-Kleehoven,
Jahresausstellung, 1937, p. 9.

Oil paintings, watercolors, and woodcuts from this impressive collection of views of the American metropolis were shown at the last annual Hagenbund exhibition in October 1937 and, prior to that, in April 1937, in the Austrian section of the *Salon de Printemps* at the Palais Royal des Beaux Arts in Brussels.³⁰⁷ Schatz’s deliberate adoption of a Modernist style vocabulary was in line with the philosophy of the Hagenbund, which promoted Modernism and was therefore increasingly exposed to criticism. In his review in the *Wiener Zeitung* Ankwicz-Kleehoven made only a passing reference to this unusually large presentation of works: “Otto Rudolf Schatz has brought back an impressive collection of New York views from his trip to America, demonstrating that even the world of skyscrapers can have its painterly attraction.”³⁰⁸ In his introduction to the review, the writer included a reference to the Munich exhibition *Degenerate Art*, taking an “anti-modern” position toward Expressionism and abstract art:

“The subjective naturalism of the Impressionist era in the late nineteenth century opened the doors to a very personal interpretation



Ex 41533

Works Progress Administration, 1937
Xylograph, private collection

M 1938 1

Wall painting for a costume party at the Hagenbund, 1938
Photograph, NLORS

by the artist and heralded a break with earlier traditions, which, since 1910, in the form of Expressionism, has developed into a highly arbitrary approach by the artist to his surroundings and, ultimately, led to a complete renunciation of nature. There can be no doubt that, in exploiting the freedom they have always claimed for their creative endeavors, artists went too far and, in that era of general fermentation, ventured considerably beyond the bounds of what is possible and attainable in art. Inevitably, there had to be a reaction to this ‘destruction of form,’ ‘non-objective art,’ ‘Constructivism,’ and all the other excesses of this revolutionary period.”³⁰⁹

It was no doubt because of this bias, which reflected the widespread opinion at the time, that the reviewer was puzzled by Schatz’s appropriation of the accomplishments of Cubism and Constructivism in a largely abstract constellation and a conscious reworking of the formal potential of the avant-garde—so frowned upon in Nazi Germany—which, in his homage to New York, the artist combined in a holistic and highly modern perspective.

Schatz showed the reverse side of the American dream in a woodcut series he created as illustrations for the German translation of Upton Sinclair’s book *Coop: A Novel of Living Together* (*Co-op: Der Weg der amerikanischen Arbeitslosen zur Selbsthilfe*), published in 1937 by the Büchergilde Gutenberg, which had fled to Prague to escape the Nazi regime – Ex 41533 ↑, Ex 32042. By 1938 Schatz had completed some 1,500 woodcuts. Those of the blocks he had been able to keep were destroyed in a Gestapo raid in 1938.³¹⁰ Schatz wrote in 1955: “I made around 1,500 woodcuts using different techniques, from simple to scrape cut. After my trip to America (1936/37) I used [...] a burin; it allows you to introduce a poetic softness and half-tones to the picture.”³¹¹ This more painterly technique, compared to woodcut, allowed soft transitions. In the series for Sinclair’s book it was used to express empathy for the fate of the destitute, who sought to build a livelihood and economic strategy through cooperatives.

On January 15, 1938, in the spirit of satire and defiance, Schatz once more organized a studio party at the Hagenbund – M 1938 1 ↑.³¹² According to a report in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, the celebration included a “series of humorous sketches

309
Ibid.

310
Schatz, *Künstler*, 1949, p. 352.

311
Ibid.

312
Anon., *Atelierfest*, 1938.



M 1938 12

Juggler, c. 1938
Oil on canvas,
Hans Schmid Private
Foundation, Vienna



M 1938 11

Circus, c. 1938
Oil on canvas,
Private collection

in which the Hagenbund artists competed with actors.” The decor was intended to give “guests the illusion” of being in the studios of painters and sculptors who had gone quite mad, and the “individual ideas were subordinate to this overall concept. The main room represented a rooftop terrace with views into the various studio windows, while the seven side rooms were merry artists’ lodgings, where work and Bohemian life continued in caricature form throughout the party. Much color and flair was painted, stuck, and sculpted onto the walls—combined with much contemporary wit and sentiment. Art critics and jurors were mocked [...]. Eduard Gaertner, Professor Stemolak, Robert Kloss, Ernst Paar, Fritz Schwarz-Waldegg, Karl Gunsam, Rudolf Pointner, and Karl Rabus³¹³ had worked together, directed by Otto Rudolf Schatz, to create the vibrant setting that has always been a key attraction at Hagenbund parties.” In a pointed satire, Schatz and his friends presented a “degenerate gallery,” which, as the reviewer wrote, “lampooned backward-looking tradition and the standardization of art.”³¹⁴

Schatz was fascinated by the repository of artistic freedom of expression and possible “anti-worlds” offered by cabaret, circus, revue, and street artists –

M 1938 11 ↑, M 1938 12 ←.

1938–1944

EMIGRATION AND PERSECUTION

As a committed pacifist and opponent of Nazism who made his sentiments known in public and was involved in political resistance, Schatz was banned from working and exhibiting from 1938 and was politically persecuted until the end of the war. He lived as an émigré in Brno and then, from 1941 to 1944, in occupied Prague. As he was in a “mixed marriage,” he was not conscripted into the army, and his Jewish wife was initially able to avoid deportation. After the success of the New York exhibitions at the Neue Galerie and Hagenbund, this dramatic change of circumstances marked the end of his official artistic recognition for the time being, although he nevertheless continued to work ceaselessly. Matejka wrote in 1947: “On his thirty-eighth birthday he began his hazardous flight, first to Brno,

313

The German artist Carl Rabus fled from the Nazis to Vienna in 1934. He exhibited at the Hagenbund until 1938; in 1943 he was imprisoned in Vienna for “racial defilement.”

314

Anon., *Atelierfest*, 1938.



M 1939 2
Venice, St. Mark's Square, c. 1939
Oil on canvas, private collection

M 1938 14
Paris, Notre Dame,
c. 1938
Oil on canvas,
Private collection

M 1938 13
Paris, Notre Dame,
c. 1938
Oil on canvas,
Private collection







M 1938 16
 Venice, Canale Grande with
 View of Santa Maria della Salute,
 c. 1938, Oil on wood,
 Private collection

Ex 35046
 Venice, Piazzetta,
 c. 1938
 Gouache on paper,
 Private collection



then through half of Europe to Italy, and thereafter, when the racial laws came into force there as well, back via Vienna and Slovakia to what was left of Czechoslovakia. In Prague he found respite for a few years, until good friends betrayed him to the Gestapo and he was arrested by the notorious Prague SD³¹⁵ and deported to a concentration camp.”³¹⁶ Paintings completed during his travels across Europe on the eve of World War II are gloomier and less realistic than his earlier works. Brooding skies and stark contrasts of light and dark dominate the urban and coastal landscapes – M 1938 14 ←←, Ex 23885 →, M 1938 13 ←←, M 1939 2 ←←, Ex 35046 ↑, Ex 6001 ←, M 1938 16 ↑. The oppressive atmosphere of the beach with a black sail and threatening clouds that resemble a formation of airships probably inspired his later series of surreal works, from *Landscape with Telegraph Masts* – M 1938 6 → to *Surreal Coastal Landscape with Sailing Boats*, both after 1938 – M 1938 4 →, which can be seen, placed vertically on an easel, in a post-war studio photo – M 1938 5 →.

315
 “Sicherheitsdienst,”
 the Nazi Security Service.

316
 Matejka, Künstler, 1947, n. p.



Ex 23885
On the Beach, c. 1938
 Gouache on paper,
 Private collection

M 1938 6
*Coastal Landscape with
 Telegraph Masts*,
 c. 1938
 Oil on canvas,
 Private collection





M 1938 4

*Surreal Coastal Landscape
with Viaduct and Sailing Boats,*
c. 1938, Oil on wood,
Private collection

Ex 19676

Otto Rudolf Schatz's studio,
after 1945, photograph, NLORS

M 1938 5

Birth of Venus,
c. 1938, Oil on canvas,
Private collection





M 1938 33
Fresco cycle,
formerly in Slatina
near Brno, 1938,
Photographs,

Wedding,
Grape Harvest,
Crucifixion,
St. Christopher,
Women with Jugs

FRESCO CYCLE IN SLATINA NEAR BRNO

The fresco cycle in Slatina near Brno, which has survived only in photographs, bears witness to Schatz's unbroken artistic desire, even in exile, and his resourcefulness in continuing to agitate publicly against the Nazi regime – M 1938 33 →. Around 1938/39, Schatz painted frescoes on the walls of the old brickworks of an abandoned industrial site. The frieze-like cycle extended in individual sections across several walls. Although Schatz was clearly not a religious person, here he painted scenes in the style of a Paupers' Bible, including a crucifixion. Its composition was inspired by Matthias Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*, but Schatz had rendered the beard and hairstyle of his martyred Jesus on the cross unmistakably in the style of an orthodox Jew. According to Fritz Karpfen,³¹⁷ he resembled a respected Jewish businessman who had been deported. This patently represented an open criticism of the racial persecution of Jews by the Nazis. Karpfen further reports that, since the frescoes began to attract an increasing number of locals, including Catholics, who congregated near the site and joined the resistance, the Nazis responded by blowing up the entire building complex.

The crucifixion scene was set among vagabonds and beggars, with an open, hilly landscape in the background, similar to the area surrounding Brno. Another section showed a grape harvest near a chapel. In the background of the depiction of St. Christopher carrying the infant Jesus is a view of the Augustinian church, today St. Thomas' Abbey, in Brno. The picture of a wedding party recalls the Marriage at Cana and *The Peasant Wedding* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Other sections showed a choir and folk dance with peasants in festive costume, and a birth scene. In a bucolic setting on the back wall, Schatz painted shepherd musicians in a landscape. Unlike traditional depictions, these were local peasant girls. The notable feature of this cycle was the combination of biblical content with local inhabitants from the city's rural surroundings, shown in their traditional costumes. Karpfen wrote in 1949:

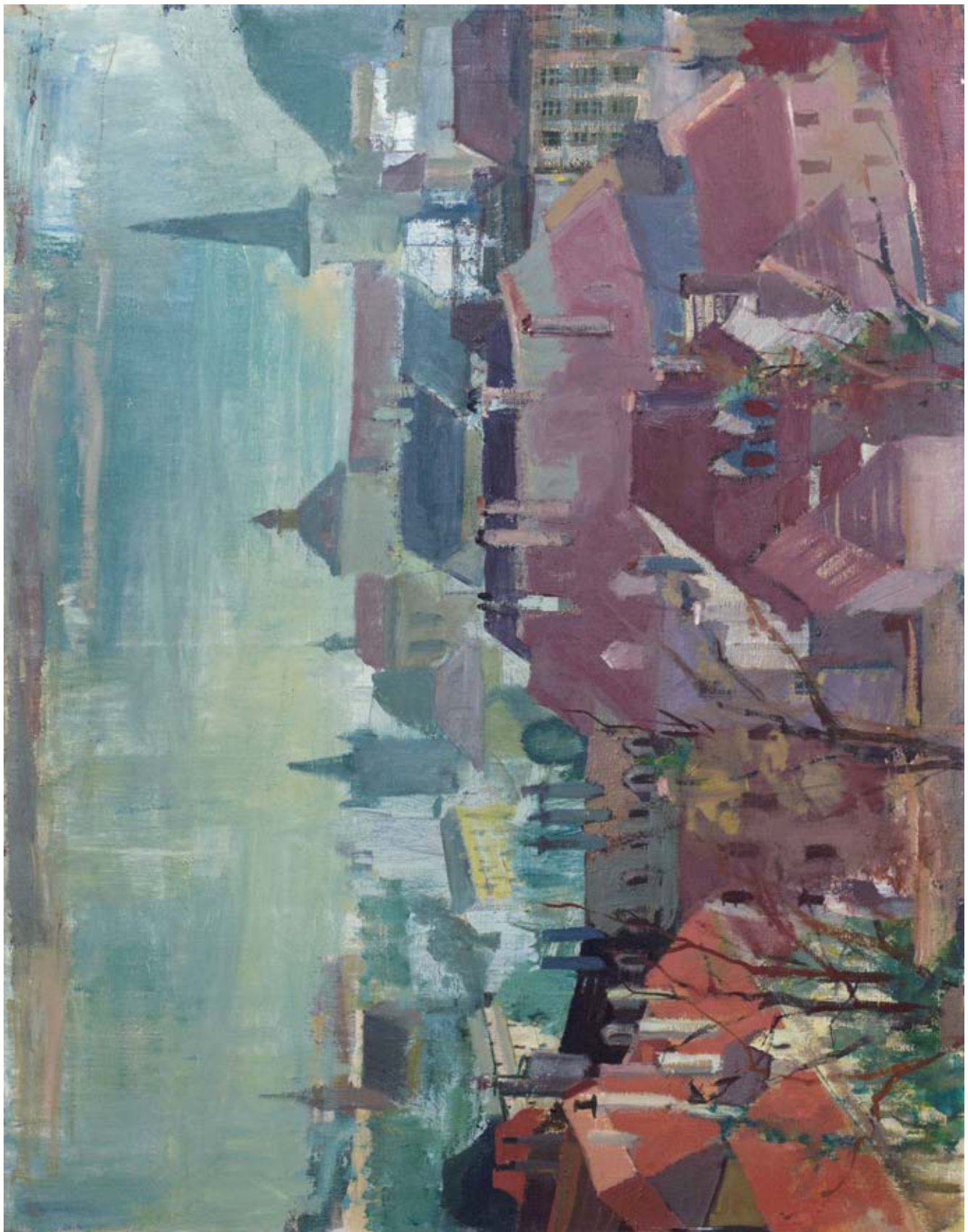
"Hundreds of country folk passed by it on their way to and from the city, as well as hundreds of workers going to and returning from the factory. Schatz used the empty whitewashed walls of the brickworks to paint large frescoes, apparently of scenes from local life and religious motifs. [...] However, the crucified martyr had the features of a businessman who had been well-known and respected throughout the region before being nailed to the swastika in a gas chamber somewhere. The priest from the nearby church complained at first about the unwanted competition, but once he looked more closely at the painting and recognized the deeper meaning of its battle cry, he ceremoniously consecrated it in front of a crowd of thousands. [...] The entire brickworks with the other frescoes, which, like the crucifixion, represented a clearly recognizable cry of indignation, were razed to the ground with a ton of dynamite."³¹⁸

317
Karpfen, Schatz, 1949, pp. 11–13;
Questionnaire "Österreichisches
Künstlerlexikon Hans Ankiewicz v.
Kleehoven," March 14, 1947,
Künstlerarchiv Belvedere.

318
Karpfen, Schatz, 1949, pp. 11–13.

319
Questionnaire 1947 (see n. 317).

According to his own account, Schatz worked in 1938 for the Erasmus publishing company in Rotterdam.³¹⁹





M 1941 1
*Market in Prague near the
Church of Our Lady Before Týn,*
1941, Oil and casein tempera
on wood, private collection

WAR LETTERS—FACTS AND SATIRE

The sudden shift in Schatz's artistic development following the outbreak of war can be explained in the context of the events at the time. To conceal his identity, Schatz used various different forms of expression, often reflecting his particular living situation. He worked under the pseudonyms "O. Cervenka" and "Sindelar." His real take on events and artistic interpretation of his experiences were expressed in the visitors' books of Schacherl and Leischner. The sense of uprootedness as an opponent of the regime in occupied Prague no doubt inspired the strange timelessness of his picture of a street scene and market near the Church of Our Lady before Týn in Leischner's visitors' book – Ex 40275 →, M 1941 1 ↑.

An understanding of Schatz's life at the time is important in order to appreciate the works he completed while underground and explain their ambivalence and hidden meanings – M 1942 1 ←. Alternating between fact and satire, he reported on the events during these dark years in his war letters to a friend. The correspondence³²⁰ lasted from December 1941 to the end of 1944 und described everyday life in occupied Prague, overshadowed by racial persecution and executions.³²¹ From 1933 until the annexation by Hitler's Germany on March 15, 1939, the Czech capital had served as a refuge for exiles. Schatz lived there and sought to survive by doing odd jobs and casual work. To escape censorship, he developed a coded writing style for his letters, which, combined with his sarcastic humor, "neutralized" his account of the atrocities he wrote about. The subtext, understandable for the recipient, described the existential hazards and everyday terror, disguised under the mantle of satire. The tone also recalls the style of his friend Ehrenzweig from the Politisches Kabarett, who, working in exile in Britain under the pseudonym Robert Lucas, penned fictional letters for the BBC, purportedly written by "Corporal Hirnschal to his wife Amalia back home in Zwieselsdorf."³²² The model for the Hirnschal character, which had already featured at the Politisches Kabarett, was Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*—"a seemingly simple, but in reality smart and resourceful man who exposed the hypocrisy and absurdity of the Nazi propaganda by taking it literally and confronting it with reality."³²³

320
See Kraft/Boeckl, Schatz,
2010, p. 182.

321
Kriegsbriefe,
publ. in Daim, Schatz, 1982.

322
Lucas, Amalia, 1984.

323
Das Rote Wien.
Weblexikon der Sozialdemokratie,
URL: <http://www.dasrotewien.at/seite/ehrenzweig-robert>
[accessed on April 27, 2017].



Ex 40275

Watercolors in Erich Franz
Leischner's visitors' book, 1943
Whereabouts unknown

Old Town Ring, Prague
St. Nicholas Church, Prague

324
Neon, Kabarett, 1933.

325
Letter from Schatz to Anton D.,
September 2, 1943, NLORS.

326
"entdeutschte Hoffende und
hoffende Entdeutschte"—a play on
words mixing up "enttäuscht"
= "disappointed," and "entdeutsch"
= "de-Germanized." Letter from
Schatz to Anton D., May 30, 1943,
NLORS.

327
Lucas, Amalia, 1984.

328
Letter from Schatz to Anton D.,
n. d. (probably 1942), NLORS.

329
Lucas, Amalia, p. 111.

The premiere of *Hirnschal macht Weltgeschichte* had taken place at the Politisches Kabarett on February 9, 1930.³²⁴ The BBC series was broadcast from December 1940 until the end of the war in early May 1945. In the last year of the war it is thought to have had a regular audience of several million. One of them was Schatz, at least occasionally. He described the censorship of foreign radio stations in a letter from Prague in September 1943: "Well, today I took my radio in to be neutered. The shortwaves are removed by the state here in the Protectorate. Why, nobody knows [...]"³²⁵ In 1982, the psychologist and art collector Wilfried Daim drew attention to Schatz's creative use of language, as in the example of a letter from May 1943: "Unfortunately you see more and more disappointed hopefuls and hopeful disappointed." ³²⁶ Schatz employed the same satirical tone as Lucas/Ehrenzweig³²⁷ when he wrote in 1942: "But with iron fists and flags unfurled our new order erupts over Europe, and the good Mr. Duce and our beloved Führer have no doubt thought long and hard about it, having had all of four days to do so."³²⁸ In a similar vein, a Hirnschal letter relating to a metaphor about flypaper said: "Look at those flies on the flypaper. We're just like them too: We're stuck here in Russia and can't get away, much as we would like to. [...] But we have one consolation, [...] just like the flies dying there: we have the image of our beloved Führer before us and the words 'The Führer commands, we will obey!'"³²⁹ For the present-day reader, these war letters illustrate how, for the pacifist Schatz, with his World War I experience, the disaster of World War II far exceeded the imaginative powers of his sarcasm in the sheer scale of its terror, overshadowing his life and creativity until the end.

ERICH FRANZ LEISCHNER'S VISITORS' BOOKS

330
Erich Franz Leischner's 1941
sketchbook with views of St. Vitus
Cathedral and the Vltava in
Prague; letter from Schatz to
Anton D., December 1941, NLORS.

Leischner visited Schatz in Prague in December 1941 and attempted to arrange a visit to Vienna for him.³³⁰ The Leischner visitors' books, kept since 1936 – Ex 40275 ↑, contain visual jottings from the 1930s and 1940s and entries from occupied Prague by Schatz. The drawings were political statements of resistance, first to

331
Letter from Schatz to Anton D.,
January 9, 1942, NLORS.

332
Ibid., January 16, 1942, NLORS.

333
Ibid., May 22, 1942, NLORS.

334
Ibid., n. d. [June 10, 1942], NLORS.

335
Reinhard Heydrich became Reich
Protector of Bohemia and Moravia
in September 1941 and was respon-
sible for setting up ghettos and
introducing draconian measures
against Jews and Czechs.
By the end of November 1941,
6,000 people had been arrested
and over 400 death sentences
carried out, earning him the
nickname "Hangman of Prague."
He died on June 4, 1942, following
an assassination attempt a few
days earlier. This led to a wave of
arrests (3,000 arrests) and 1,300
executions by court-martial.

336
Letter from Schatz to Anton D.,
n. d. [June 10, 1942].

337
In retaliation for the assassination,
the Gestapo destroyed two villages,
Lidice and Lézaky; all male inhabi-
tants over the age of sixteen were
shot and the women deported to
concentration camps.

338
Letter from Schatz to Anton D.,
August 3, 1942, NLORS.

339
Ibid., October 15 and
November 26, 1942, NLORS.

340
Ibid., May 30, 1943, NLORS.

341
Fritz Saukel (1894–1946)
General Plenipotentiary for Labor
Deployment under Adolf Hitler;
accused and found guilty of war
crimes at the Nuremberg Trials in
1946.

342
Letter from Schatz to Anton D.,
June 11, 1943 NLORS.

343
Ibid., June 16, 1943 NLORS.

Austro-Fascism and then to the Hitler regime. In their sobering realism they reflect hopelessness and despair. Just like his coded writing style, his pictures also contained a more or less hidden subtext. In two watercolor sketches with views of Prague, Schatz had annotated the one showing the Old Town Square as: "Hand-painted by Mr. Casual Laborer / from Prague / 1943," the second picture, showing St. Nicholas Church: "Done by Mr. Peddler." His marginalization as a person is expressed in a gloomy pencil drawing of a lonely figure on a dark street, dated: "Vienna 1940 / ORS." Political caricatures reflected the mood of the exiled political refugees in the resistance. One drawing shows a sculptor modeling a statue of Hitler with the inscription: "Head sculptor Jo / finally German / minded."

To escape political persecution, Schatz burned his personal documents in 1942.³³¹ On his way to a visit to Vienna he noted: "It will be interesting to see if I still know my way round Vienna. I don't belong there anymore. I already feel more at home here in Prague. [...] New buildings with all modern comforts are not uncommon here and I love that. And people who are involved with the arts as much as in the old Č.S.R. are very likable."³³² He wrote about the executions of Czechs and the death of his father-in-law in Theresienstadt.³³³ The letters describe everyday life in Prague with raids on public baths³³⁴ and report on the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich and the brutal reprisals by the Nazis:³³⁵ "In return, several hundred Czechs were shot, and not just men! Every day you can read the names of those sentenced to death in the newspapers. Often over thirty or forty. [...] The police are searching feverishly [...] items the assassins left behind at the scene are displayed on Wenceslas Square and a reward of 20,000,000 crowns or 2 million reichmarks has been offered. That will no doubt help to find the perpetrators. They'll have them in a few weeks."³³⁶ The assassination gave rise to brutal reprisals against the civilian population. Schatz wrote: "Not a lot going on here. Martial law, etc. Today another village in the Protectorate has been razed to the ground. Everyone shot."³³⁷

To avoid being conscripted into the Reich Labor Service, Schatz sought alternative employment: "I'm painting edelweiss and gentian on wooden candlesticks. As long as I can, in other words, as long as they'll let me. Because, many people are now being sent to the Reich to work, and I would rather not go. The climate doesn't agree with me. [...] I'm going to take photos now. Enlargements, etc."³³⁸ His friend Steffi was arrested because she had sheltered a Jew. For the first eighty-four days, until November, she was kept in prison with just the one summer dress she had been wearing. Only then was Schatz allowed to send her food and clothing. He wrote: "I'm at my wit's end. If this goes on for much longer I'll be ready for the lunatic asylum [...]. Soon it will be Christmas [...]. Last year I spent it with Steffi, somewhat overshadowed by a friend's suicide, and now Steffi is gone too, and I don't know yet where I'll be going, for I won't be able to stand it in Prague [...]. Today I found out that, if she's even still alive by then, Steffi will most likely be a human wreck when she comes out."³³⁹

A visit to Vienna in May 1943 is summarized laconically: "Most people have pretty much forgotten what it's like to be a human being and are just waiting to die, only they don't know it yet."³⁴⁰ Schatz was under constant threat of being deported as a forced laborer. His teeth were falling out. He mentions measures to prevent people from listening to foreign radio stations and receiving reports about Nazi defeats, labeled as "enemy propaganda": "Gauleiter Saukel³⁴¹ was in Prague and he'll show them, he will! Everyone will have to work, he says [...]."³⁴² With inimitable sarcasm he states: "It doesn't really bother me so much if things don't turn out as they say on the radio. It's a long way from propaganda to reality."³⁴³

Ex 41911,
Thistle, 1942
 Double-exposed film negative,
 NLORS



“Nothing new to report from Prague. Heydrich memorial day and stamps and naming of streets. Plenty of people out in the streets and even more in the concentration camps.”³⁴⁴

The conflict with his father and the irreconcilable differences with his family in Vienna on account of their support of the Hitler regime came to a head in 1943. Schatz wrote of his father’s death:

“This is what happened. We had said goodbye because I had to go and see an official in Prague [...]. On Monday afternoon a telegram came that father was dying, so I got on a train but only arrived in Vienna nineteen hours later: collision etc. goulash! But thankfully, touch wood, another lucky escape. Father was already dead and so we buried, or rather cremated, him on Wednesday, no, Thursday, and the urn was immured on Saturday. His final worry were the latest war reports, and then that was it. The old man must have been beside himself about the attacks on Berlin, and the Vienna alarms were the final straw. So he drew his own conclusion, didn’t quite die a hero’s death, but something had started to fall apart for him, and he obviously didn’t want to go through it all again.” The supply situation worsened: “Nothing to report, except that I am slowly depleting my wardrobe in exchange for food. That way I can kill two birds with one stone: I have something to eat and less to lose [...]. In Brno the poster walls were once again plastered with death sentences [...]”³⁴⁶

344
 Ibid., June 17, 1943, NLORS.

345
 Ibid., n. d. [December 5, 1943],
 NLORS.

PAINTING IN OCCUPIED PRAGUE —MINIATURE LANDSCAPES

The war overshadowed life in Prague throughout 1944. As Schatz was not entitled to receive painting utensils, he had been painting miniatures since the late 1930s so as to save on materials and bypass the painting ban. He used an old-masterly

346
 Ibid., October 3, 1943, NLORS.



Pictures shown in their original size:



M 1937 26

Landscape with Rock Face, c. 1937
Miniature, casein tempera and
japan on wood, private collection

M 1941 2

Bathing Woman, c. 1941
Miniature, casein tempera and
japan on wood, private collection

M 1943 17

Fall Landscape with View of the Mountains, 1943/44
Miniature, casein tempera and japan on wood,
private collection

M 1944 1

Lovers in Prague, 1944, miniature, casein tempera
and japan on wood, whereabouts unknown

casein technique, which enabled him to capture an unexpected breadth of vision on a tiny format of just a few square centimeters – M 1937 26 ↑, M 1940 9 →, M 1941 2 ↑, M 1942 5. In *Evening Landscape*, painted for Grete Schacherl back in 1931 – M 1931 5 – Schatz had already experimented with the expressive potential of radical minimization of a geological formation, reduced to the point of abstraction and transferred to a miniature format – M 1931 6 →. Now his “world landscapes en miniature” with deserted views of distant mountains and pristine lakes offered the greatest possible contrast to the reality of war and were easy to sell – M 1943 17 ↑, M 1944 1 ↑, M 1938 25 →.³⁴⁷ He also used this technique occasionally to paint larger pictures – M 1940 6 →, M 1940 3 →, M 1940 2 →. In the watercolor series *Zlata Praha*, 1944, infused with subtle humor, Schatz conveyed the resilience and, at times, exuberant spirit of Prague’s inhabitants as they sought to live a normal life in spite of raids and Nazi terror – Ex 6019 →. After the war, Matejka was reluctant to confront the Viennese public with this ambivalence in Schatz’s Prague pictures and wrote in 1947:

347
Ibid., January 29, 1944, NLORS.

“A number of pictures, of Prague in the summer with the Vltava,
Charles Bridge and Prague Castle, and with Prague girls, all

M 1940 9

Landscape with Path, c. 1940
Miniature, casein tempera and japan
varnish on wood, private collection

M 1940 2

*Bergerkogel near
Heiligenblut in East Tyrol*,
c. 1940
Tempera grassa on wood,
Private collection





M 1938 25

Landscape with Chapel and Lake,
c. 1938

Miniature, casein tempera and japan
varnish on wood, private collection

M 1940 3

Woodworkers, c. 1940

Miniature, casein tempera and japan
varnish on wood, private collection

M 1940 6

Salzburg, c. 1940

Miniature, casein tempera and japan
varnish on wood, private collection

M 1931 6

Two Mountain Tops and Plain, 1931

Miniature, casein tempera and japan
varnish on wood, private collection





Ex 6019
Zlata Praha, Bathing Ship
on the Vltava, 1944
 Watercolor on paper,
 Private collection

enveloped in a veil of mist, of the kind that seems to descend only on the Vltava and the Seine, bear witness to this. Even more compelling, however, is a Prague picture book showing all its typical squares and scenes from Prague life, a book that will enrapture anyone who knows and loves Prague.”³⁴⁸

In his letters from 1942 Schatz describes the brutalization of society following the exodus of many of the city’s inhabitants and German-Jewish immigrants in 1939:

“Soon I will have no one left here, everyone is disappearing from public life; the taverns and bars are slowly but surely starting to remind me of 1920. Do you remember how these places used to be full of yokels and farmhands back then? That’s pretty much how it is again now. It’s all bad alcohol and bad manners at exorbitant prices and the louder the better. So I don’t go out much.”³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸
 Matejka, *Künstler*, 1947, n. p.

³⁴⁹
 Letters from Schatz to Anton D.,
 August 31/September 30, 1942
 and December 1, 1942, NLORS.

This oppressive mood is captured in the painting *Tavern in Czechia, 1942* – **M 1942 9 → →**. Inspired by Bruegel’s pictures of peasant feasts, it shows the bustle of a Prague inn. While at first glance the scene looks to be an anecdotal depiction of popular entertainment with a skittle alley, a sign on the wall that reads “JUDEN VERBOTEN / Židům zakazamo” in two languages transforms it into a sinister,

apocalyptic reminder of reality. A man is chalking an SS symbol on the entrance door, on the wall right next to it is Schatz's signature, revealing and incriminating himself as a witness of the persecution of the Jews, while the general populace are drinking beer and enjoying themselves with card games and skittles.

In February 1944, he and his wife Vally were threatened with eviction from their dwelling in Prague: "All mixed marriages are to be evicted, and so I'm in the delightful position of losing my lodgings. That's the latest news."³⁵⁰ He sought help from relatives in Vienna: "I spoke to my dear brother-in-law Paul about the possibility of getting some work through him. I've had no luck with that and so I'm still rather worried about where to do my bit for the final victory. But I won't give up in a hurry."³⁵¹ He was clearly hoping for the war to end soon when he wrote on May 1, 1944:

"[...] and so I'm writing to you, old chum, on the last day of April, because tomorrow it'll be May and you never know when death will catch up with you. Fingers crossed, let's hope it'll be a while yet. But since times are hard and human lives keep getting cheaper, anything is possible. The prices for everything else are going up, and we are getting cheaper. Well, my dear Toni, we have always known this, but people need to see things for themselves, otherwise they don't believe it. So a toast to the First of May. The factories are closed, and from May 2nd it's a seventy-two-hour week. The newspapers said that there'll be no May Day demonstrations. Whatever next? Why would we want to demonstrate anyway? It just smacks of the bad old system days, which are long gone, thank goodness. How hard life was back then, with us both having to work so much, and now we've already had two long years of being unencumbered by the pursuit of our profession."³⁵²

In May, Schatz traveled to Brno, Vienna, Munich, Innsbruck, Kitzbühel, and Salzburg, describing the war-torn landscape:

"The transformation from high-rise block to pile of rubble is plain to see. It's not even worth talking about, because such cities are only of interest to waste scavengers [...]. When we arrived back in Prague, they'd just sounded the all-clear: the first time that American aircraft had been in the ČSR [...]. So, as you can see, everywhere is getting its fair share, you just have to make sure you're not in the wrong place at the wrong time. That's all that matters."³⁵³

Schatz watched the looming defeat of Hitler's Germany with relief:

"Munich is pretty much a ruin [...]. Overall, there appears to be a particular antipathy to anything Northern."³⁵⁴ He also notes: "It came quickly but never mind, seeing that we surely have victory in our pockets. One day peace will break out and it will all just seem like a bad dream [...]. It's just a good thing that we have the Führer and he has everything under control, otherwise we would almost have cause be worried [...]. As it is, we can sing defiant songs—although, some of them we're not singing anymore, like the one about Stukas over Africa or the Engelland song. [...] I'm planning a

350
Ibid., February 17, 1944, NLORS.

351
Ibid., March 26, 1944, NLORS.

352
Ibid., April 30, 1944, NLORS.

353
Ibid., May 14, 1944, NLORS.

354
Ibid., May 22, 1944, NLORS.



trip to Vienna soon, to get my bearings and meet some old friends.”³⁵⁵

In June 1944 he was conscripted as an air raid warden. He wrote:

“Today I took my shoes in for repair. Three pairs. They’re all worn out. And there are still plenty more, but none can be worn. They all need repairing. That’s what happens when you have a shoemaker who’s a Jew, and no one knows about it, and as soon as they find out he kills himself.”³⁵⁶

On June 8, 1944, he noted with relief:

“The invasion has finally begun.”³⁵⁷

He was hoping for anti-fascist resistance in Vienna:

“Today I got a letter from Vienna XXI, Schlingerhof. The second major air raid there was on Floridsdorf. Right now I received news that there was a third one in the night of the 27th, and this evening, the 29th, the radio announced another one, so they’re really piling it on. It’s all in the hands of fate. My first wife Hilde, as head of the letter censorship department, will have her hands full now. It’s not quite the same here as it was in Berlin. First of all, less flak and no fighters, and it’s not Berliners, only Floridsdorfers [...] they won’t let themselves be led to the slaughter like their brothers in the Old Reich. The land around Vienna is historical, and we’ll see whether the Viennese will go under or whether they still have some of their old grit. [...] Slowly but surely this war really is becoming a total war, and those who cried the loudest don’t like it much. They hadn’t expected it to be quite as total as that [...].”³⁵⁸

In July 1944 Schatz wrote:

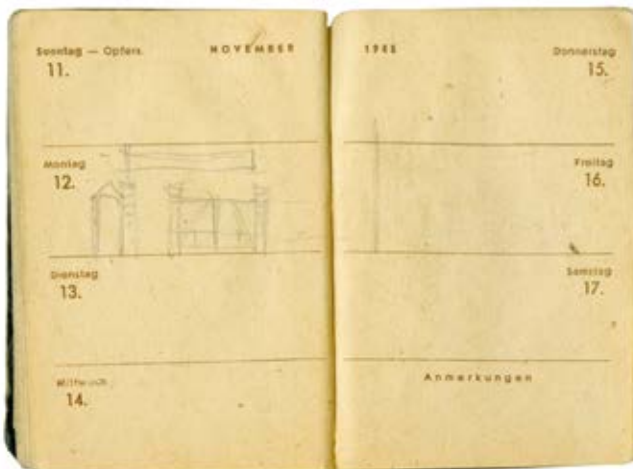
“As I’m in the countryside with no radio to hand, I only learned today about the assassination attempt on our beloved Führer. So for the third time now I’ve been able to breathe a sigh of relief, the first two times having been after the invasions [...]. It said that the Führer had been planning to meet the Duce afterwards. But today there is no mention of it. Our dear Duce surely wouldn’t be calling off this meeting out of fear, yet what other reason could there be? A dark day in Germany’s dark times. It’ll all get better soon, now that H. Himmler is taking charge of things. That something like that could happen here! After our national-political training, I had thought that only Jews or Negroes, possibly Italians, were capable of such treason. And now it turns out to have been ex-Volksgenossen! Though, funnily enough, in the official statement it says something about stupid generals. And it also keeps mentioning the abysmal stupidity of these people. Strange that the powers that be have only just realized this now. To me these top brass have always seemed stupid. But how come they were entrusted with commanding whole

355
Ibid., May 22, 1944, NLORS.

356
Ibid., June 10, 1944, NLORS.

357
The Allied landing in Normandy commenced on June 6, 1944.

358
Letter from Schatz to Anton D., June 30, 1944, NLORS.



Ex 41770

Camp Gate, 1945

Pencil on paper, NLORS

Ex 6025

Fleeing Concentration Camp Inmates, 1945

Watercolor on paper, private collection

Ex 6016

Forced Laborers and Nazi Guards, 1945

Watercolor on paper, private collection

Ex 6021

Speech by a Nazi Guard to Camp Inmates, 1946

Watercolor on paper, private collection

Ex 38155

Scene with Soldiers and Refugees, 1945

Watercolor on paper, private collection

armies all these years? The entire Eastern campaign now turns out to be one great big stupidity; that's probably also the fault of these generals—and here was I thinking it was the Jews again! Strange how much unseen madness and stupidity there is around. First Rudi Hess, and now these generals. It's just as well I'm not in the military; I'd find it hard to salute these people. I'd always be thinking, maybe they'll betray me tomorrow. It's not easy to be a Volksgenosse when you consider all the things that could befall our Führer!"³⁵⁹

CONCENTRATION CAMP INTERNMENT

The correspondence ended there because, on October 11, 1944, Schatz was arrested by the Gestapo in Prague and, after being detained for sixteen days, was transferred on October 27 to the labor camp at Bistritz (Bystrice u Benešova), a special camp for Aryans with Jewish wives and so-called mixed-blood Jews (*Mischlinge*), located near the Bohemia SS training area³⁶⁰—basically a concentration camp.³⁶¹ On November 15, 1944, he wrote in a letter to Ankwicz-Kleehofen that he had been sent to a labor camp under the classification of “deportation of mixed-blood Jews and Aryans in mixed marriages.”³⁶² In his diary he drew a sketch of the camp gate – Ex 41770 ←. He was interned until May 5, 1945, just before the official end of the war on May 8. The reason for his internment was “racial,” because he was married to a Jew.³⁶³ When he was arrested he gave as his provisional profession “fancy goods and construction worker.” Like Schatz, Vally had been active in the resistance and was arrested on February 11, 1945, and deported as a forced laborer to Theresienstadt.³⁶⁴ She survived, yet the marriage was dissolved after the war.

Diary entries give an account of his time in the camp. As an internee he noted the evacuation of Breslau (Wrocław) on January 20, 1945. It had been ordered by the German Wehrmacht at short notice and was ill-prepared. Thousands of old people and children died in the ensuing panic to leave the city. Fifteen-year-old members of the Hitler Youth and sixty-year-old men were recruited to defend the city. Those who refused were court-martialed and shot. On January 24, the inmates set off for Klettendorf (Klecina), and on 25th to Gräditz (Grodziszczce). On February 3, Schatz noted “apparently going to Prague,” and on the 4th “news of departure for Beneschau (Benešov),” on February 15 to Prague, then to the labor camp in Tworschowitz (Tvoršovice), where he had to do excavation work. On February 22 he noted two suns in the sky. Over the course of the following days his laconic entries read: “Lice assembly / slept in blue naphthalene with fleas / nothing new / waiting / waiting and death of a friend.” The next entries are: “No mail / everything's shit / ditto.” In March he wrote: “Heart pain / mustn't die!” He became ill, on March 24, “night raid.” On March 30 he had a heart attack. The next day: “Cleaning / whipping,” in April: “Built trenches and transfer to Bistritz.” On April 12 he had a second heart attack and wrote: “ailing,” April 16: “sickroom / finished painting two pictures of Tworschowitz,” on April 18: “painted / air raid,” later in April: “Digging anti-tank ditches.” Then: “Indoor duties until the end of the war.” On May 2, 1945: “Mass assembly, painted closing of the camp, then transport to Brno.” On May 10: “Spoke to Vally.” Saturday, May 12: “Austria free! / Consulate.” On May 16 he noted: “Everything that makes up our lives is so transient / unfortunately I am sick / at the moment. But it will get better / it has to!”³⁶⁵ A series of pictures show the hardships of camp life – Ex 6016 ←, Ex 6021 ←, Ex 6025 ←, Ex 38155 ←.

359

Ibid., July 22, 1944, NLORS.

On July 20, 1944, an attempt was made by Claus von Stauffenberg to assassinate Hitler at the Führer headquarters. [Translator's note: Volksgenosse is a racially charged Nazi term for ethnic German, literally “fellow countryman.”]

360

Lagerausweis SS-Tr.Ub.Pl. “Böhmen” no. 1033, DOEW, 20.100/10.168.

361

According to Viktor Matejka in Daim, *Kunstabenteuer*, 1997, p. 125.

362

Letter from Otto Rudolf Schatz to Hans Ankwicz-Kleehofen, November 16, 1944, Wienbibliothek H.I.N.162.166; Karoly/Mayerhofer, Glück, 1997, p. 98.

363

Lagerausweis (see n. 360).

364

Encyklopedie dejin města Brna, URL: http://encyklopedie.brna.cz/home-mmb/?acc=profil_osobnosti&load=18169 [accessed on August 16, 2017].

365

Note in diary, June 16, 1945, NLORS.



REALISM IN THE POST-WAR YEARS 1945–1961

RETURN TO VIENNA

On July 12, 1945, Schatz had a document certified by an attorney in Prague that from mid-November 1944 until the end of January 1945 he had been interned in Klettendorf concentration camp for reasons of “political unreliability.”³⁶⁶ Because of his erratic lifestyle and relationships with several women, his wife Vally filed for divorce. On September 13, 1945, as an Austrian citizen, he was given permission to leave by the Ministry of the Interior in Prague. In November he returned to Vienna, where he lived at Grosse Mohrengasse 8B in the 2nd district. He was helped in his repatriation by city councilor Viktor Matejka, one of the few politicians to actively support the return of Austrians. Schatz produced oil paintings and watercolors of the destroyed city as a “visual artist’s reportage”³⁶⁷ – M 1945 5 →, M 1945 10 ←.

To articulate his experiences artistically, he adopted a style of expressive realism. It enabled him to convey the all-important message of pacifism, his most urgent concern, directly from his own observation—for example in pictures like *Escape from Vienna*, 1945 – M 1945 4 →. The frieze-like composition sensitively encapsulates all the psychological drama of a woman with pram, a man, and several small children fleeing from bombed-out houses, while in the foreground an antique column and brick wall symbolize the end of a culture. Similar to Picasso’s work *Guernica*, which had caused such a stir at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1937, the actual theme of this expressive painting is the universal idea of world peace.

366
Advokat Ju Dr. Adolf Kocna,
Prague, July 12, 1945, NLORS.

367
Schatz, *Künstler*, 1949, p. 352.

368
Matejka, *Künstler*, 1947, n. p.

“No one has captured the devastation of our city in 1945—in woodcuts, drawings, and in paint—as compellingly as Schatz. The City of Vienna is proud to have acquired from him one of the most harrowing impressions of our city in 1945; I am talking about the painting of the destroyed Danube quay, shown for the first time at the anti-fascist exhibition ‘Niemals vergessen’ and then sent to Zurich to the Austrian art exhibition, where—with typical Austrian procrastination—it has not yet been put on display. Mention should also be made of the new graphic works depicting his concentration camp internment and the stricken life in Vienna.”³⁶⁸

POST-WAR YEARS IN VIENNA

The war years, the time in exile, and the horrors of the concentration camp left deep marks in the work of the artist, who had continued to work throughout, practically without interruption. In the painting *Destroyed Quay*, 1945, he produced an eyewitness account, almost akin to photojournalism, of the damaged city as a disaster-ridden, dystopic, apocalyptic topography. He used the medium of painting to its advantage by emphasizing the contrast between pale, ruined buildings against a dazzling night sky and the staffage of looters and ordinary passers-by among the rubble. A self-portrait from 1945 – M 1945 3 → shows him homeless, sitting idly with a burin in his hand, in a melancholy pose before the night sky amid a ruined cityscape, a sketchily drawn woman clearing rubble (*Trümmerfrau*) hurrying off in the background. Having already begun to produce erotic drawings back in 1941, while in exile in Prague – Ex 41424 →, in post-war Vienna these offered him a good source of income and a means of survival.

In 1946, Schatz gave Matejka the portfolio *Zlata Praha* – Ex 6019 –, containing ten watercolors painted in Prague in 1944, dedicated to: “City Councilor Dr. Viktor Matejka, relentless campaigner against the sleeping sickness in and outside city hall.” Matejka displayed this at a Schatz exhibition in Vienna’s city hall. He commissioned Schatz to provide woodcut illustrations for the magazine *Tagebuch*. In 1946, Matejka organized an exhibition featuring drawings and graphic works by Schatz and Karl Wiener, one of the contributors to Schacherl’s visitors’ books.³⁶⁹ A reviewer wrote:

“Otto Schatz is a passionate storyteller and a no less passionate portrayer of current events, as seen through the eyes of a sympathetic and adept observer. A portfolio of documentary works from the war-torn and devastated city of Vienna still evokes the atmosphere of this terrible time and is by no means merely a report, but a truly artistic consolidation of events, far removed from any kind of cheap naturalism or illusionism. The smaller albums devoted to various aspects of a single theme, such as ‘Prague’ or ‘The Prater,’ are no less accomplished. Here he speaks to us as a witty, satirical person, and it is to be hoped that a publisher can be found to make these illustrative and far-reaching expressions available to a wider audience.”³⁷⁰

In 1946 Schatz became a member of the Vienna Secession.

In 1947, Schatz was awarded the city’s Prize for Graphic Art by mayor Theodor Körner; he completed eighteen woodcuts for Peter Rosegger’s novel *Jakob der Letzte* – Ex 19666 – with a foreword by Matejka. Schatz showed pictures and graphic works in the foyer of the Konzerthaus, which was now being used as an exhibition space. The exhibition came about thanks to a collaboration between the Wiener Konzerthausgesellschaft and Galerie Welz.³⁷¹ The reviewer Roderich Roy wrote:

“Schatz is one of the few proactive artists and committed anti-fascists to have managed to capture even the most recent events

³⁶⁹
tz, Maler, 1946.

³⁷⁰
B. F., Ausstellung, 1946.

³⁷¹
Ankiewicz-Kleehoven, Ausstellung,
1947.



M 1945 3

End of the War, c. 1945

Oil on canvas, private collection

Ex 41424

Das ist die Liebe der Matrosen ..., 1941

Book with watercolors

Peter Infeld Private Foundation, Vienna



M 1945 5

Destroyed Quay, 1945

Oil on wood, Wien Museum

M 1945 4

Escape from Vienna, 1945

Oil on canvas, private collection

with the tools of Expressive Realism. His documentation of the battered city of Vienna, his pictures of the life of its tormented inhabitants after the devastation of the Second World War are salient proof of his humanist understanding and Bruegel-like genius.”

Referring to the ban on exhibiting and practicing his profession imposed on Schatz in 1938, and in view of the continued hostility toward Modernism after 1945, the reviewer felt compelled to add: “This Austrian painter, who developed rapidly from decorator’s assistant to true artist, is also a good example of the questionable value of art chambers and academia, whether of Nazi or democratic hue.”³⁷² Writing for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Alfred Zohner emphasized the significance of the war years:

372
Roy, *Ausstellung*, 1947.



Ex 39717

Fresco design with
 torch bearer,
 c. 1949

Gouache on paper,
 Private collection



“[On his return to Vienna] there is practically nothing left of his earlier work. He had to start afresh. For Schatz, these years of enforced unproductivity were also a time of maturing, but not of transformation. The pictures and graphic works currently on show in the foyer of the Vienna Konzerthaus [...] clearly demonstrate that Schatz has remained a sharp observer of the times and of everyday life. Whether we look at the woodcut series from his trip to America or the colorful drawings of popular life in Prague, the symbolic pictures of the horror of the concentration camp or the oil studies of Vienna in ruins—Schatz’s art always strives to express the naked reality.”³⁷³

Ankwicz-Kleehoven’s review acknowledged Schatz’s talent for portraying people: “When he paints circus performers or cabaret dancers, he ‘underscores,’ as city councilor Dr. Matejka aptly put it in his opening speech, the ‘makeup and masquerade’ so as bring out not just ‘the wretchedness but also the stubborn self-assertion of those living, essentially, on the margins of society.’”³⁷⁴

In 1948, Schatz was awarded the City of Vienna’s Prize for Graphic and Applied Art³⁷⁵ and painted a portrait of mayor Karl Seitz. The Globus Verlag published a book version of his 1941 *Prater* portfolio with forty-eight watercolors – Ex 32721 →. He painted murals in Schloss Weinberg in the Mühlviertel, which was being used as a seminar building by the trade union. The murals no longer exist – Ex 39717 ↑. He also continued to paint views of industrial culture, including the glowing furnace of *Ternitz Steelworks*, 1950 – M 1950 1 ←. As a testament to the achievements of civilization, he produced a watercolor series documenting the construction of Kaprun power plant at different stages of completion – Ex 10277 →. In *The Dam Grows*, 1949, the artist reveals his ambivalent fascination with technology in a reworking of Bruegel’s *Tower of Babel*.

Between 1950 and 1960, he completed sgraffito works, frescoes, and mosaics for the City of Vienna. In 1951 he won a competition for a tile mosaic for the Westbahnhof railway station, but the project was never implemented. In 1952, he painted a fresco entitled *Reconstruction* – M 1953 1 → for the Waldheim Eberle printing company in Seidengasse, Vienna 7. The mural, painted in the style of “exaggerated realism,”³⁷⁶ conveyed the enthusiasm for this collective achievement.

373
 Zohner, Künstler, 1947.

374
 Ankwicz-Kleehoven, Ausstellung, 1947.

375
 Anon., Preise, 1948.

376
 Lampe, Fresken, 1953.



Ex 32721 (above left and right)

The Prater, 1941

Watercolor on paper,
Private collection

Ex 10277

The Dam Grows, 1949

Watercolor on paper, private collection

M 1953 1

Reconstruction, frescoes for the
Waldheim Eberle printing company, 1952/53
Photograph in *Graphische Revue Österreichs*





M 1953 10

*San Apollinare Nuovo
in Ravenna, 1953*

Tempera grassa and gouache
on paper, private collection

M 1955 1

*100,000 New Municipal Dwellings
by the City of Vienna,
1955–1957*

Mosaic for the Franz-Novy-Hof
public housing development

M 1955 1

*Otto Rudolf Schatz in front of the
mosaic cartoon, c. 1955*

Photograph, NLORS

In 1953/54 he traveled to Italy, visiting Venice, Riccione, Naples, Bologna, and Florence, where he captured the vitality of these Italian cities before the arrival of mass tourism, showing tangled overhead cables, construction sites, and poster-covered walls, for example at San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna – M 1950 16, M 1953 10 ↑.

In 1955, Schatz was awarded an honorary professorship by Federal President Körner.³⁷⁷ Kallir-Nirenstein presented a “station picture” and Schatz’s *View of St. Stephen’s Cathedral from the First Viennese High-Rise*, c. 1955 – M 1954 1 → at the Neue Galerie in an exhibition entitled *Vienna, City and Countryside*.³⁷⁸ The painting shows the city in the process of becoming a modern metropolis. On the rooftop terrace of the high-rise building on Herrengasse, smartly dressed guests are looking out toward the old town with St. Peter’s Church and St. Stephen’s Cathedral.

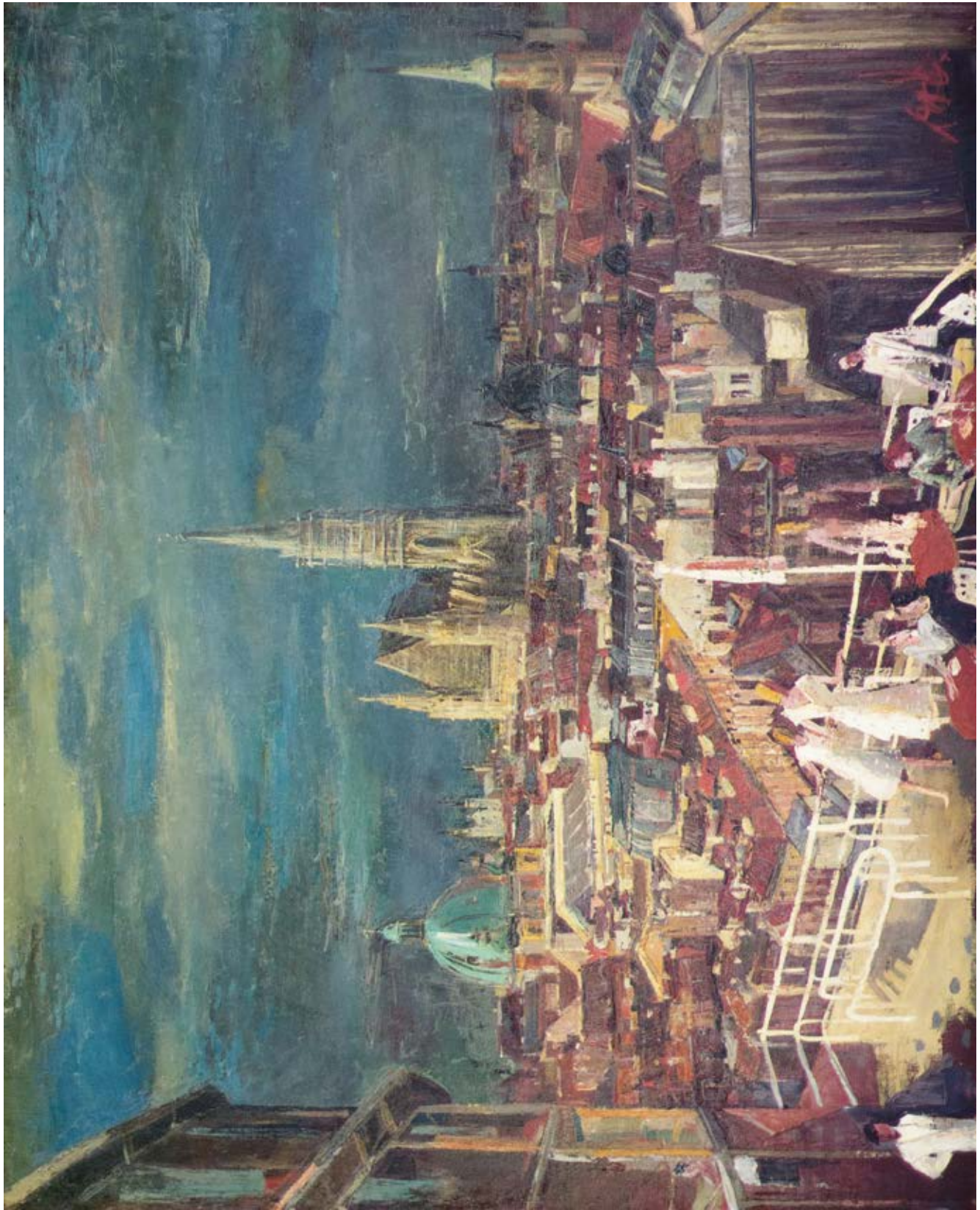
In early 1957, Schatz completed a mosaic on the Franz-Novy-Hof social housing block, entitled *100,000 New Municipal Dwellings by the City of Vienna* – M 1955 1 ← ←.

377

Anon., Schatz, 1959;
Zvacek, Mitarbeiter, 1961.

378

Newspaper cuttings
ANG 543/ 3-10.



Schatz died of lung cancer on April 26, 1961. Among his last illustrations were the “Austria Panorama” pictures for the Verlag des Österreichischen Gewerkschaftsbunds and the woodcut series *Burning Hot Desert Sand*, 1961 – Ex 40097,³⁷⁹ which depicted the French Foreign Legion as a destroyer of freedom during the Algerian War of Independence.

In 1962, members of the Hagenbund organized a commemorative exhibition at the Künstlerhaus, showing a total of seventy-three works. Ernst Paar, a member of the Hagenbund and part of the group around Schacherl, designed a poster with Schatz motifs. Josef Luitpold wrote in the exhibition catalogue:

“In memoriam: O. R. Schatz epitomizes the statement in Paul Gauguin’s letter: ‘It is our fate as seeking and thinking artists to break under the blows of the world. But only our bodies break. We sink, but we are not dead.’ Schatz has experienced these blows of the world from a young age through six decades to his final hour. This painter and graphic artist could have earned fame and fortune, he could have escaped the blows of fate, had he kept his given talent and incessant hard work separate from the context of his time, had he not defiantly confronted the present in his every waking hour. A Paris magazine wrote about him early on: ‘All of his figures are martyrs, but through their sacrifice shines the enormous will to change the world.’ Every visit to his studio in Vienna’s 2nd district was a shock to the system. A meagre workspace devoid of comfort, but full of paintings, watercolors, and woodcuts. He himself and the immeasurable abundance of his creativity together make up the life story of a noble artist in an ignoble time. Arnold Hauser recently wrote that works of art are challenges and messages. O. R. Schatz is one of these challenging messengers of the twentieth century.”³⁸⁰

For a retrospective at the Künstlerhaus in 1978, Viktor Slama wrote about Schatz:

“He criticizes the snobs and petty bourgeois, he protests against yes-men and opportunists, he rebels against oppressors, against greed, and the absurdity of war, he is a tragic warrior, an eternal rebel, a fighter on the barricades even at a time when these were considered obsolete. And against that he protested even more, because he just couldn’t help being who he was.”³⁸¹

The commemorative exhibition was a result of the tireless commitment of the avid art collector and psychoanalyst Wilfried Daim in Vienna,³⁸² who also produced a number of publications about Schatz, including his war letters,³⁸³ and was in possession of the most extensive collection of Schatz’s work. In 2010, the book *Otto Rudolf Schatz* was published, containing a provisional catalogue raisonné by Dietrich Kraft and Matthias Boeckl, which served as a starting point for this present publication. The 2016 exhibition *O. R. Schatz & Carry Hauser: In an Age of Extremes* at the Wien Museum, curated by Ralph Gleis, compared two of Austria’s most interesting artists of the interwar years.³⁸⁴

Schatz was a member of the Österreichische Kunstschau, the Hagenbund and the Secession.

379
Keller, *Solidarität*, 2010, pp. 90–91;
Keller, *Internationalismus*, 2010,
pp. 94–95.

380
Josef Luitpold, “In memoriam,”
in exh. cat. Vienna, Künstlerhaus,
Schatz, 1962, n. p.; Arnold Hauser
(1892–1978) Hungarian-German
art historian and sociologist.

381
Slama, *Memoriam*, 1978.

382
Daim, *Holzschritte*, 1977.

383
Daim, *Kriegsbriefe*, 1979.

384
Exh. cat. Vienna, Wien Museum,
Schatz & Hauser, 2016



CONCLUSION

Considering Schatz's artistic achievements in relation to his recognition by the wider art world, it becomes clear that, unlike other Austrian artists of the time, it was his steadfast political commitment that provided the inspiration for his work, but which also, in combination with the course of history, contributed to the fact that he and his work almost sank into oblivion after his death. This was due in the first instance to the fault lines in his biography: his political persecution and exile, and the resulting discontinuities in his development. Furthermore, he was uninterested in questions of style, which was no doubt detrimental to the reception of his art. His intention, however, was never to create art for the purposes of intellectual discourse, but to draw on his experiences to produce works that encapsulated the spirit of the times. Today in particular, his multifaceted artistic statements are fascinating in their candor and immediacy. He exemplifies the ability of the avant-garde to respond creatively to life and to transpose it into art. The reassessment of New Objectivity finally revealed Schatz's importance as an artist and attentive eyewitness, whose work contributed significantly to shaping the First and Second Austrian Republics.

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