

# secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession  
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien  
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## **Koloman Moser, *Reigen der Kranzträgerinnen*, 1898**

Model panel, reconstruction 2017–18

Lead conservator: Johannes Duda

In cooperation with the Federal Monuments Authority Austria

**On occasion of the centenary of Koloman Moser's (1869–1918) death, a model panel from his fresco *Reigen der Kranzträgerinnen* (*Dance of the Wreath-Bearing Maidens*) will be on display on the Secession's rear side façade. Created in 1898 for the Secession building, which was completed that year, the fresco originally adorned the rear façade. In conjunction with the 2017–18 renovations, a section of the frieze has been reconstructed in cooperation with the Federal Monuments Authority Austria.**

The temporary reconstruction of the frieze is based on photographic material and descriptions of the work from the time of its creation. The first step was the production of a perforated stencil after a rectified scale printout of a historic photograph. The three-layer plasterwork was executed in sections, so-called day's works, that correspond to segments of the motif. It is crucial that the most recently applied layer of fine plaster is still wet when the relief is cut. Minor inaccuracies are inevitable due to the manual execution but also make for a much livelier overall impression. Additional steps included stippling the structured backdrop surfaces with twigs and modeling the wreaths and heads of hair. The reconstruction of the color scheme draws on historic written sources and the grayscale of the black-and-white photographs. These documents allow for a definitive replication of the original gilding, white dresses, and terracotta-colored outlines; other areas of the frieze such as the coloration of the waves in the background and the dark stippled plasterwork are approximations based on the best available historical evidence.

The fresco *Reigen der Kranzträgerinnen*, a procession of dancing girls woven together in a single composition, originally graced the entire rear façade and rear lateral walls. In characteristic art nouveau fashion, the sculptural wall decoration blends ornamental surface treatments with a lively linear design. With the wavy lines in the background, the billowing dresses, and especially the alternation of front and rear views of the maidens' upper bodies, Moser endows the hieratic array of figures with dynamic energy. In the building's overall symbolic scheme, the *Reigen der Kranzträgerinnen* embody a state of trance-like Dionysian ecstasy, contrasting with the dominant Apollonian motif of the laurel and its mythological connotations of renewal, initiation, and vitality.

The painter, graphic artist, and artisan Koloman Moser (b. Vienna, March 30, 1869; d. Vienna, October 18, 1918) was one of the leading exponents of Viennese art nouveau. In 1897, he, Gustav Klimt, Josef Hoffmann, Josef Maria Olbrich, and nineteen other artists founded the Vienna Secession to promote their progressive artistic ideals and overcome the constraining academic tradition.

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In addition to the *Reigen der Kranzträgerinnen*, Moser created the stained-glass window *Archangel of Art* in the Secession's entrance hall, which was destroyed in 1945. He also played an important part in designing the art association's magazine, *Ver Sacrum*, and numerous exhibitions. In 1903, Moser joined Josef Hoffmann and the industrialist Fritz Wärndorfer in establishing the Wiener Werkstätte, which aimed to bring the applied arts together to produce comprehensive design solutions for all aspects of life.

This belief in the inseparable union of art and everyday life sparked fundamental disagreements among the Secessionists, prompting Moser, Klimt, and those who shared their views to resign from the artists' association in 1905. A few years later, the *Wreath-Bearing Maidens* as well as the Secession's original motto, "To every time its art. To art its freedom," which had been emblazoned on the building's main façade, were taken down.

The reconstruction of the *Reigen der Kranzträgerinnen* is a research project implemented in cooperation with the Federal Monuments Authority and led by the conservator Johannes Duda.

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Hours: Tuesday–Sunday 10am–6pm  
Permanent presentation: Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

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