

**"Portrait of Mrs. Leiser", a lost painting by Gustav Klimt
has been found after 100 years**

Kinsky Art Auction House

Redacted by Victoria Sara Dazin



After about 100 years, a lost painting by Gustav Klimt that belonged to a Jewish family has been found

The work "Portrait of Mrs. Leiser", which once belonged to the wealthy Jewish Leiser family living in Austria and was last seen in 1925, was recently found in Vienna, and its value is estimated at 54 million dollars. "The painting is considered lost in all catalogs, meaning that it was destroyed or burned during the war. We did not expect it to appear again," the auction house said in a statement. The piece is called "Portrait of Mrs. Lieser", and it previously belonged to a wealthy Jewish family of industrialists who lived in Austria, and was last seen in 1925. While it was unclear what happened to it in most of the years since it was last seen, it is known that the painting has been with its current owner since the 1960s.

The Kinsky auction house estimated the value of the painting at more than 54 million dollars, and finding it is considered a "sensation", according to them. "Such a rare painting of such great artistic significance and value has not been available on the Central European art market for decades," the statement said.

A late painting by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt has resurfaced after disappearing for almost 100 years, and is set to be auctioned off. The painting was last seen at a Viennese exhibition in 1925, with a black-and-white photo the only previous proof of its existence. The family of the current owner has possessed the artwork since the 1960s. The Kinsky auction house estimates its value is up to \$82 million.

Portrait of Miss Lieser was commissioned by a wealthy Jewish industrialist's family and painted by Klimt in 1917 shortly before he died.



The photo identifies the last owner of the painting as a member of the Lieser family.

Henriette Lieser, who had remained in Vienna despite the Nazi rule, was deported in 1942 and murdered in Auschwitz in 1943.

The unfinished portrait re-emerged when the current owner sought legal advice from lawyer and art law expert Ernst Ploil before inheriting it. Unclear how family of the current owner inherited painting. The family of the current owner has possessed the artwork since the 1960s, Mr Ploil says. "We have a gap between 1925 and the 1960s." But Mr Ploil stressed they had found no evidence the work had been looted, stolen or unlawfully seized before or during the Second World War. It is now set to be auctioned on April 24 on behalf of the current Austrian owners and the legal successors of the Lieser family. The sale is in accordance with the Washington Principles, which determine the procedure for returning art stolen by the Nazis. The back of the painting is "completely untouched" and has "no stamps, no stickers, nothing", Mr Ploil said. "There are no indications of any illegal confiscation during the Nazi era the usual stamps from the Gestapo or a shipping house where looted art was stored," he said.

No claims have yet been made by the descendants of the Lieser family, but some of them have travelled to Vienna to see the painting.

A painting by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt that was stolen in 1997



A painting by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt that was stolen in 1997 might have been discovered hidden in a wall of the Italian gallery it was thought to have been stolen from. The painting was thought to be stolen by fishing rod-wielding thieves in 1997. But this week (December, 12, 2019) it was found hidden inside a secret compartment in the gallery wall. It's in excellent condition but experts are trying to work out if it is genuine. The story of the missing masterpiece, a portrait of a young woman completed in 1917 and valued at 60 million euros (\$97 million), is considered one of the world's most baffling art mysteries. It disappeared from the Ricci Oddi gallery in the northern city of Piacenza in February 1997, with police saying they believed thieves used a fishing line to hook it off the wall and haul it up through an open skylight to the gallery roof where the frame was discarded.

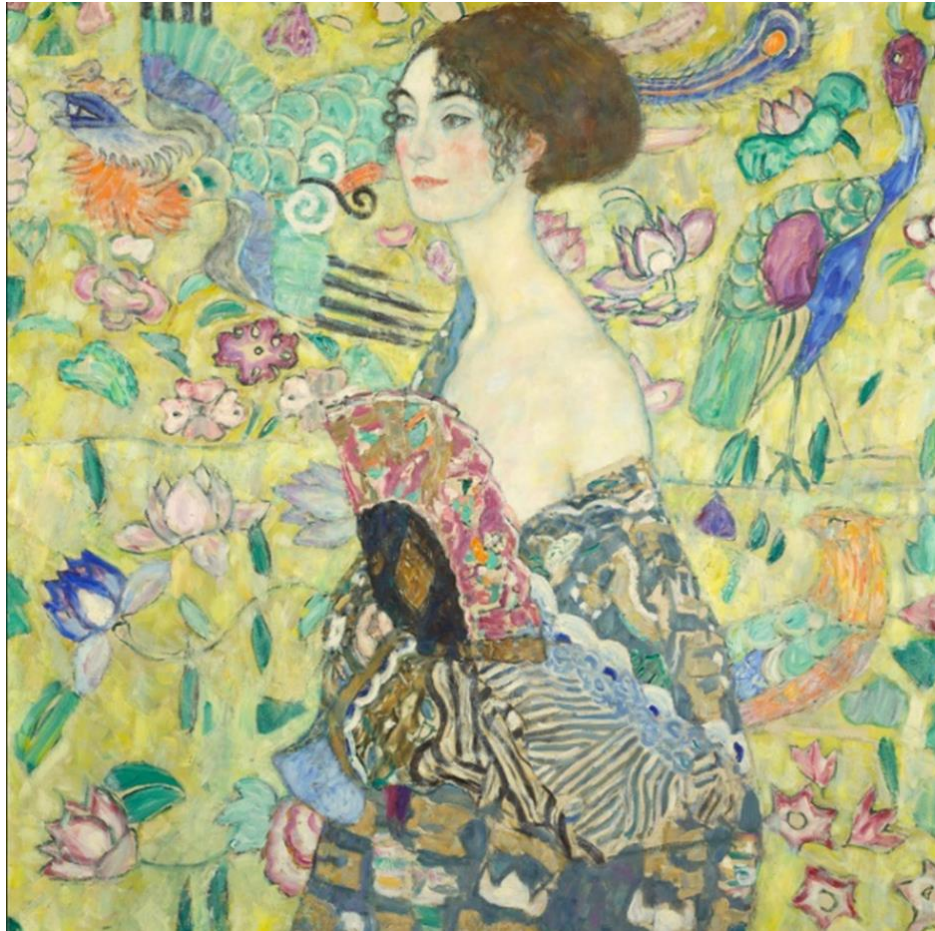
A skilled forgery of the painting, wrapped up and posted to a disgraced politician, was seized by authorities a month later, adding to the mystery.

But the story took another twist this week as a gardener cleared ivy off the gallery's outside wall.

Discovering a small trapdoor, he opened it to find what appeared to be the painting, inside a plastic rubbish bag. "This is incredible," said Jonathan Papamareng, head of culture in Piacenza town council. Police took charge of the find and experts will now examine it to check its authenticity. Mr Papamareng said it was hard to believe that the original had been hidden in the gallery wall ever since its disappearance, saying the building had been carefully searched after the theft. "The painting's condition is excellent. It seems strange to believe it has been tucked away in a wall, close to the ground and vegetation for 22 years," he added.

The Klimt is considered particularly important because shortly before its disappearance, an art student realized it was painted over another work previously believed lost - a portrait of a young lady that had not been seen since 1912 - making it the only "double" Klimt known to the art world.

Last June, Klimt's Dame mit Fächer (Lady with a Fan) was sold in London



Klimt portraits rarely come on the open market.

The Kinsky auction house estimates its value at 30 to 50 million euros (\$49 million-\$82 million), but higher sums are conceivable.

Last June, Klimt's Dame mit Fächer (Lady with a Fan) was sold in London for £74 million (\$142 million), setting a new European art auction record.

Gustav Klimt's Portrait of Miss Lieser to be auctioned off after disappearing for almost 100 years, Posted Fri 26 Jan 2024, ABC/wires

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-27/gustav-klimt-portrait-of-miss-lieser-found/103396254>

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