

**BRONCIA KOLLER-PINELL**  
**AN ARTIST AND HER NETWORK**

Lower Belvedere  
15 March to 8 September 2024



Broncia Koller-Pinell, *Silvia Koller mit Vogelkäfig*, 1907/08  
© Sammlung Eisenberger, Vienna

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Broncia Koller-Pinell (1863–1934) was more prominent on the international art scene around 1900 than virtually any other female artist associated with Viennese Modernism. Between 1890 and 1930 her work featured in almost fifty exhibitions in cities including Vienna, Munich, Warsaw, and Chicago. Her greatest successes were as part of the *Kunstschau* group centered around Gustav Klimt.

*General Director Stella Rollig: The anti-Semitic atmosphere of the 1930s, Koller-Pinell's erasure from art history during the Nazi period, followed by the hesitant rediscovery of her work meant that she was only represented in museum collections at a late stage. In this solo exhibition we are showcasing the quality of her painting and commemorating her significant contribution to the art scene of Vienna 1900.*

The exhibition focuses not only on Broncia Koller-Pinell's major works but also examines her networks and her activities to promote art.

*The life of Broncia Koller-Pinell was steeped in art, very much in the spirit of the Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte, both organizations she actively helped to develop. Her connection with artists such as Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann is reflected in the commissions she gave them, while her own paintings reveal her receptiveness to international developments and the characteristic visual language of the Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte, says curator Alexander Klee.*

The Belvedere is devoting a show to the painter featuring over eighty works and for the first time also highlighting her cultural network. It explores her contribution as a patron, a role she shared with her husband Hugo Koller.

*Participating in the exhibitions of the so-called *Kunstschau* group was described by Broncia Koller-Pinell's daughter Silvia as the greatest success of her mother's life. This subsequently gave rise to further networks and artist groups that shaped the art of Viennese Modernism, curator Katharina Lovecky adds.*

Within the context of Broncia Koller-Pinell's artistic milieu, the exhibition traces her stylistic development from the Munich School of the late nineteenth century via Impressionism toward New Objectivity in the 1920s. Interactions and influences are demonstrated through works by artists such as Heinrich Schröder, Egon Schiele, Karl Hofer, and her daughter Silvia Koller.

## BIOGRAPHY BRONCIA KOLLER-PINELL

### **February 23, 1863**

Bronislawa (called Broncia) Pineles is born in Sanok on the San in Galicia. The city in southeastern Poland is part of the Habsburg Empire at this time. Broncia's father, the fortifications engineer Saul Pineles, comes from an influential Jewish family.

### **1873**

After her father is involved in a professional dispute, probably motivated by anti-Semitism, the family leaves Galicia and moves to Vienna. In nearby Oberwaltersdorf, Saul Pineles founds a textile factory in 1884.

### **1881**

Broncia Pineles has drawing lessons with a private tutor, soon followed by tuition in painting. She starts signing her work Pinell.

### **1888–90**

Training at the Women's Academy in Munich, a private art school for female artists.

### **1890**

Return to Vienna. Broncia Pinell exhibits her first pictures at the Vienna Künstlerhaus.

### **1893**

Contributes to the World's Fair in Chicago.

### **1896**

Marries Hugo Koller, a specialist in electrochemistry and a qualified

physician. The couple moves to Golling near Hallein. Birth of their son Rupert.

### **1898**

Move to Nuremberg. Birth of their daughter Silvia.

### **1902**

The family returns to Vienna and moves to an apartment in a block on the site of the former entrance wing of the Theater an der Wien.

### **1904**

Hugo Koller acquires the residence in Oberwaltersdorf from the estate of the deceased Saul Pineles. The electricity plant Hugo had built there becomes the family's main source of income.

### **1906**

Broncia Koller-Pinell and the young painter Heinrich Schröder start sharing a studio.

### **1908**

Participates in the legendary Kunstschau exhibition in Vienna.

### **1909**

Participates in the Internationale Kunstschau.

### **1911**

Exhibition at Vienna's Galerie Miethke, together with Heinrich Schröder.

### **1912–14**

Architect and designer Josef Hoffmann remodels the residence in Oberwaltersdorf.

**1913**

Move to Argentinierstrasse in Vienna. Gustav Klimt nominates Broncia Koller-Pinell as a member of the newly formed union of artists, the Bund Österreichischer Künstler (BÖK).

**1918**

Intensive contact with Egon and Edith Schiele. The New Secession Vienna, spearheaded by Schiele, is founded in the apartment of Hugo and Broncia Koller-Pinell.

**1919**

Co-founder of the artist union Sonderbund. Participates in the exhibition organized by Der Wassermann, a new artist association in Salzburg.

**1932**

The dissolution of the Kunstschau group means the loss of Broncia Koller-Pinell's

most important artistic network. The group's Jewish and women artists are not invited to join the Secession. Move to Prinz Eugen-Strasse in Vienna.

**1934**

Broncia Koller-Pinell dies on April 26 after a long illness.

**1938**

Following the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany, Hugo Koller gives up the family apartment in Vienna. He withdraws to Oberwaltersdorf with Silvia and Rupert Koller, who are seen as "half-Jewish" in the Nazi period.

**1961**

On the initiative of her daughter Silvia, Broncia Koller-Pinell's work is finally presented again at an exhibition on the premises of the Austrian state printing press.

## EXHIBITION TEXTS

### **Early Successes**

Women were not allowed to study at an art academy in Vienna until 1920. Broncia Pineles therefore started her artistic training by taking private lessons with a drawing tutor. She taught herself oil painting and presented her first work in this technique to the Austrian painter and academy professor Leopold Carl Müller, who recommended her for further tuition. Changing her name to Pinell, Broncia spent two years studying at the Women's Academy in Munich. Back in Vienna, she enjoyed her first successes: "Afternoon with Grandmother" was shown in 1890 at the annual exhibition of the Vienna Künstlerhaus and even featured at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Whereas the dark palette of her early works still echoed the style of the Munich School, the artist was soon influenced by more recent movements such as German Impressionism.

### **The Secession: Meeting of Minds**

The artist Broncia Koller-Pinell and her husband Hugo Koller were already forging ties with key players from the Vienna Secession in around 1900, after presumably meeting these artists in the circle of theosophist Friedrich Eckstein. Their contacts included the painters Carl Moll and Gustav Klimt. The couple also commissioned the designers Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann to furnish their apartment located in the entrance wing of the Theater an der Wien. Just down the road at the recently built Secession—the artist association's exhibition building—Koller-Pinell encountered works of the international avant-garde. However, her own art was never shown there. Although female artists were occasionally represented at Secession exhibitions, women were not accepted in this union until 1949.

### **The Kunstschau Network**

In 1905 a group of artists in Gustav Klimt's orbit left the Secession, losing their prestigious exhibition space as a result. However, this group made a robust appearance on the public stage in 1908 by staging a major exhibition known as the Kunstschau. The show presented the work of some 130 artists in an exhibition complex designed by Josef Hoffmann on the site of today's Konzerthaus. Broncia Koller-Pinell contributed four paintings and nine woodcuts and met with great success. In 1909 the Internationale Kunstschau, focusing on European modernism, was held at the same venue. Work by Koller-Pinell was included once again. These exhibitions led to the formation of the Kunstschau group, which would remain the artist's most important network until its dissolution in 1932.

### **New Connections**

The Neukunstgruppe (New Art Group), which was founded by Egon Schiele in 1909, was groundbreaking for the development of Austrian Expressionism. In 1913 the union joined the Kunstschau group and was thereafter part of Broncia Koller-Pinell's art world. Her interaction with this new generation of artists—including Albert Paris Gütersloh, Anton

Faistauer, and Robin Christian Andersen—led to a change in style. Her brushstrokes became much looser and more visible, her application of paint drier. Furthermore, the painting "Becoming and Fading" is striking due to its existential theme and pathos. Koller-Pinell and her husband were not only friends with the young artists but also supported their work through numerous purchases.

### **Interactions**

Broncia Koller-Pinell's main exchange of ideas in her late career was with her daughter Silvia. Silvia had studied in Berlin from 1921 to 1923 with Karl Hofer, a painter from the movement known as New Objectivity. The influence of this realistic style is clearly revealed in Koller-Pinell's matter-of-fact still lifes. She therefore never lost her receptiveness to new sources of inspiration, which she continued to absorb into her art. Up until 1931, she was contributing to major European exhibitions. However, following the dissolution of the Kunstschau group in 1932, Koller-Pinell, as a woman and a Jew, was not invited to join the Secession. Thus began the erasure of her art from public memory. It was not until sixteen years after the end of the Nazi regime that works by Broncia Koller-Pinell were first acquired by museums, largely thanks to the efforts of Silvia Koller to bring her mother's art back into the public eye.

## QUOTES

"For the time being I am using your motifs; my studies look like your Naschmarkt sketches. My sole focus is to capture the impression."

**Heinrich Schröder to Broncia Koller-Pinell, June 18, 1909**

"I am hard at work; Schröder thinks the harvest picture will be my best piece."

**Broncia Koller-Pinell to Hugo Koller, July 24, 1908**

"My delight at the best of parties as a child could not be greater than my joy at having my work included in this wonderful Kunstschau."

**Broncia Koller-Pinell to Hugo Koller, May 30, 1908**

"The wooden sculpture is now in my glass cabinet. (...) I have never seen such fine wood on the art market. But now we have to apply the brakes. (...) Please don't buy anything else, even if you feel tempted."

**Broncia Koller-Pinell to Hugo Koller, November 27, 1913**

"When he (Schiele) was here, he was always in a flurry of activity, drawing, browsing books, hauling pictures from father's trunks, which, without him, we would never have found the time to examine ourselves."

**Silvia Koller's diary entry on the day Egon Schiele died, October 31, 1918**

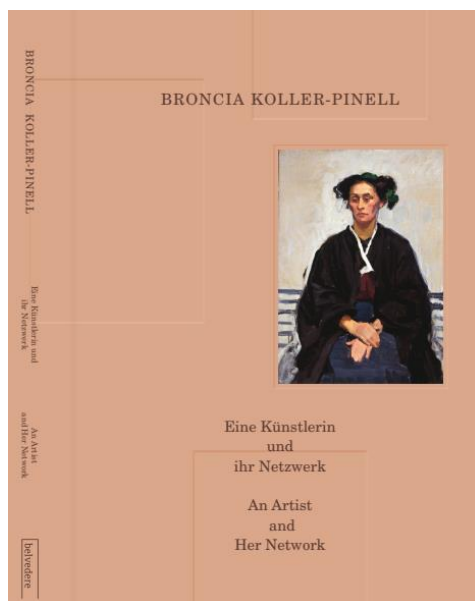
"On August 31—exactly two months ago!—he drew me while I drew his wife. We never dared to draw him, although he would perhaps have liked to sit for us; the evenings after dinner were always so lovely as well."

**Silvia Koller's diary entry on the day Egon Schiele died, October 31, 1918**

"My work is particularly daring, and it is a shame that I do not have you here with me."

**Broncia Koller-Pinell to Silvia Koller, January 31, 1929**

## EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



**Broncia Koller-Pinell.**  
**An Artist and Her Network**

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

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