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Julius Klinger: Posters for a Modern Age **Celebrates a Founding Figure of Modern Poster Art**

*Influential advertisements, illustrations, prints, and more
parallel the rise of graphic design as a profession*

MIAMI BEACH (April 27, 2017) — Starting this fall, The Wolfsonian–Florida International University calls attention to the transformative designs of one of history’s leading graphic artists in *Julius Klinger: Posters for a Modern Age* (October 6, 2017–April 1, 2018). The exhibition will outline the development of the Austrian designer’s career through over 100 posters, prints, drawings, and book illustrations from The Wolfsonian’s collection and beyond—commissions that reveal Klinger’s knack for infusing beautiful imagery with wit and an astute marketing sensibility. Their display in Miami Beach will mark the first U.S. solo exhibition devoted to the designer, and a unique opportunity for visitors outside of Europe to experience so much of his work in one place.

“Julius Klinger was a designer whose work resonates today for its charm, flair, humor, and variety,” said Jeremy Aynsley, exhibition curator and professor of design history at the University of Brighton. “He was an outstanding draughtsman who captured the elegance of the times in his posters, yet also made strongly satirical images that engaged with the issues of the day.”

Klinger (1876–1942) was born near Vienna to a Jewish family and established his reputation as a prominent graphic artist, illustrator, typographer, and prolific writer closely associated with the Vienna Secession art movement and Jugendstil, the German derivation of Art Nouveau. Working in Austria, Germany, and briefly the United States, Klinger helped create or modernize the image



“We cherish a presumptuous hope: that perhaps in roughly fifty or a hundred years, our works may stand as forceful cultural documents of how the merchant advertised his wares at the start of the twentieth century.”
 – Julius Klinger

and identities of countless clients ranging from theaters and cabarets, art manufacturers, and commercial companies to public agencies over the course of three decades. He died at an extermination camp near Minsk after the Nazis’ annexation of Austria during the Second World War.

Central to *Julius Klinger* will be the strong, striking graphic elements that became his signature style and reflect his direct approach to communication: bold color; minimalist, clear visuals stripped of unnecessary detail; and linear compositions influenced by Japanese prints and calligraphy. Klinger distinguished commercial art, serving a client’s goals and messages, from fine art, which he argued prioritized self-expression—a trajectory that paved the way for the emergence of graphic design, or “Reklamekunst” (advertising art), as a specialized field.

Designs on view at The Wolfsonian include:

- A poster for *Lustige Blätter* [Funny Pages], a leading satirical magazine, that features fishing centaurs in a fantasy scene (1909);
- A poster for Hollerbaum und Schmidt (1910), in which Klinger amusingly advertised the Berlin printer’s services through his own self-portrait;
- A poster for Münchener Faschings-Redoute [Munich Carnival Ball], designed for the city’s carnival season (1914);
- A poster for TABU (1919) that showcases Klinger’s skill in using graphic line to define the identity for the cigarette-paper company;
- A poster for RAVAG, Austria’s first radio network, which Klinger promotes through the motif of abstracted radio masts (1924);
- Intricate illustrations for *Die aegyptische Helene* [The Egyptian Helena], a book based on Richard Strauss’ opera (c. 1928); and
- An announcement for a ten-week course on advanced poster design led by Klinger at The New School, New York, proudly proclaiming him “Europe’s most prominent poster artist” (1932).

“The art of persuasion is a key interest of The Wolfsonian, and Klinger was a master,” said Wolfsonian director Tim Rodgers. “Through his instrumental graphic work, our visitors will consider the power of design in affecting change, often by using tactics still employed by advertisers, corporations, and brand influencers today.”

In tandem with *Julius Klinger*, The Wolfsonian will publish a companion book with an essay by Aynsley and translated extracts from Klinger's writings.

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Exhibition Support

Julius Klinger: Posters for a Modern Age is made possible by Funding Arts Network, Inc. (FAN).

About Julius Klinger

Julius Klinger (1876–1942), born in Dornbach near Vienna, was a poster designer and graphic artist. Klinger studied at the Technologisches Gewerbemuseum in Vienna. In 1895, he worked for the Vienna fashion magazine *Wiener Mode*. Associated with both the Vienna Secession and Jugendstil at the turn of the twentieth century, he moved briefly to Munich (1896), where he worked for the *Meggendorfer Blätter* and other art journals, before he moved to Berlin (1897), where he made his name as a poster designer for the art printer Hollerbaum und Schmidt. From 1897 to 1902 he collaborated on several magazines including *Lustige Blätter*. Returning to Vienna in 1915 for service in the First World War, he established a studio with a group of younger designers that together became known as “the Klinger School.” Klinger introduced himself to an American public in 1923, when he arranged for the publication of the profusely illustrated volume *Poster Art in Vienna* from Chicago. His first visit to the United States was in December 1928, when he was invited as artistic advisor at Mac Manus Inc., a subsidiary to General Motors in Detroit. He returned for a second visit in 1932 to deliver a class in Advanced Poster Design at the New School, New York, by then billed as “Europe’s most prominent poster artist.” In the final years of the designer’s life, Klinger, an assimilated Jew, was banned from working in public. He and his wife Emilie were transported to an extermination camp in Maly Trostenets near Minsk, where they were killed on June 9, 1942.

About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University

The Wolfsonian–FIU is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collection comprises approximately 180,000 objects dating from 1850 to 1950—the height of the Industrial Revolution through the aftermath of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is \$12 for adults; \$8 for seniors, students, and children ages 6–18; and free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, and children under 6. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 10am–6pm; Friday, 10am–9pm; Sunday, noon–6pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at wolfsonian.org for further information.

The Wolfsonian receives generous and ongoing support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council.

About Florida International University

Florida International University is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as R1: Doctoral Universities - Highest Research Activity and recognized as a Carnegie engaged university. It is a public research university with colleges and schools that offers 196 bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral programs in fields such as engineering, computer science, international relations, architecture, law and medicine. As one of South Florida’s anchor institutions, FIU contributes almost \$9 billion each year to the local economy. FIU is Worlds Ahead in finding solutions to the most challenging problems of our time. FIU emphasizes research as a major component of its mission. FIU has awarded more than 220,000 degrees and enrolls more than 54,000 students in two campuses and three centers including FIU Downtown on Brickell, FIU@I-75, and the Miami Beach Urban Studios. FIU’s Medina Aquarius Program houses the Aquarius Reef Base, a unique underwater research facility in the Florida Keys. FIU also supports artistic and cultural engagement through its three museums: Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, The Wolfsonian–FIU, and The Jewish Museum of Florida–FIU. FIU is a member of Conference USA and more than 400 student-athletes participating in 18 sports. For more information about FIU, visit fiu.edu.