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RETHINKING MODERN AUSTRIAN ART BEYOND THE METROPOLIS

JULIA SECKLEHNER

ROUTLEDGE

Rethinking Modern Austrian Art Beyond the Metropolis

This study examines the role played by regional cultures in modern art and visual culture in Central Europe between 1918 and 1938.

Analysing paintings, photographs, prints, and illustrated magazines in relation to topics such as tourism, social activism, rural exoticism, gender, and ethnic diversity, the book offers a fresh perspective on Central European art and visual culture. It pays particular attention to Austria, a country often ignored in histories of modernism in Central Europe, yet one where the countryside gained high visibility as a part of modern culture between the wars. Examples from Czechoslovakia and Hungary also play an important role in comparison and challenge the nationally fragmented histories of modernism in the region. The book's approach overall is also relevant beyond Central Europe: It corrects assumptions that modern art and visual culture were at home in the urban space and emphasises the role of the countryside as an agent of renewal and emancipation in order to construct a more nuanced history of modernism.

The book will be of interest to scholars studying art history, Central European studies, European studies, modernism, and cultural history.

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Julia Secklehner

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Designed cover image: Die Bühne 334 (1932), cover. Austrian National Library, Vienna, https://anno.onb.ac.at

First published 2025
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This book is part of a project that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 786314).

European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

ISBN: 9781032658810 (hbk)
ISBN: 9781032658841 (pbk)
ISBN: 9781032658865 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865

Typeset in Sabon
by KnowledgeWorks Global Ltd.

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Acknowledgements

This book was written within the framework of the collaborative grant project 'Continuity/Rupture: Art and Architecture in Central Europe 1918-1939 (CRAACE)', funded by the European Research Council (ERC). I am grateful to the ERC for supporting this project, and my biggest thanks go to Matthew Rampley, Marta Filipová, Christian Drobe, and Nora Veszprémi, who have provided continuous feedback and support over the past years. I learned a lot from you. Special thanks must also go to Jana Hajková, without whom this book would have never been completed, and to Loredana Zeddita and Isabella Vitti for their patience and support. It was enriching to exchange ideas and chapters with Megan Brandow-Faller, Laura Morowitz, Rebecca Houze, Béla Rásky, Tim Corbett, Christian Karner, Christina Wieder, and Marie-Noelle Yazdanpanah. Thanks to Eva and Stephi for always remembering my deadlines and listening patiently even though they have so much going on. Finally, I am thankful to have always had someone by my side who encouraged and supported me. Writing a book is a collective effort, no doubt.

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Introduction

Central European Modernism and the Countryside

In 1948, the writer Hans Marboe asked: 'Where is this much-talked-of Austria? What is her place in space and time in history and culture?'[1] The answer to this question could be found in his extensive volume *The Book of Austria*, whose primary aim was to prove that Austria was 'a lovely place in the world'.[2] Written in the aftermath of a World War that left the country destroyed and guilty of supporting the murder and forced emigration of many of its citizens, Marboe's Austria was in need of an image makeover. It did so by emphasising the country's natural beauty, its cultural history, and its fitting constitution as a perfect holiday land for foreign visitors.[3] Despite the rhetoric for a new beginning after a devastating war, however, the construction of the pleasant alpine state of Austria did not have to start from scratch. Indeed, the views of Austria as a 'lovely' country, with a grand imperial history in Vienna and a breathtaking alpine landscape, offering history, grandeur, and 'cosy' traditions was manifested some decades earlier, in the First Austrian Republic. Soon after the country was consolidated as a small alpine state in 1918, art and visual culture about the country's 'new' rural landscapes proliferated, eventually becoming tied to the ideals of the Austrofascist regime of the 1930s.

Rural modernism was a central aspect of the interwar Austrian cultural landscape, yet little attention has been paid to its effects and variants beyond a regional level. This is the case, even though notions of the 'periphery' have long been tied to discourses on artistic modernism in Central Europe. In his call for a 'horizontal art history', for example, Piotr Piotrowski has called out the misperception of Central European modernism as a 'derivative' and 'regional' variant of artistic developments in Berlin and Paris.[4] Similarly, Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius traced the construction of Central and Eastern Europe as a 'semi-exotic' periphery in visual culture, showing how this vast geography has for centuries been cast as an 'ethnic' and 'backwards' place at the edge of Europe.[5] Klara Kemp-Welch, Beáta Hock, and Jonathan Owen, meanwhile, have proposed the definition of 'minor modernism' to describe art from the region, seeking to define 'how the modernisms of East-Central Europe were at the revolutionary heart of the modernist enterprise as a whole'.[6] The unifying point in these debates is Central European modernism's 'fluid interpretation of the modernist idiom and its intermixing with local twists that gave rise to the particular power of their creativity'.[7] Visual examples to underline these texts have included Ľudovít Fulla's (1902–1980) (Figure 0.1) colourful cubism, the ethnographic modernism of Karol Plicka (1894–1987) (Figure 0.2), and the folk-inspired craftwork and painting of Anna Lesznai (1885–1966).[8] Based on this selection of works alone, it is apparent that a significant component of the 'local twists' that define them find their roots in the specific geography of Central Europe as a small geographic space with

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-1

Figure 0.1 Ľudovít Fulla. *Blessing of the Vessel*, 1932. Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava.

extensive rural areas. And yet, the impact of rural spaces on modern art in the region has only found limited mention.[9] This is all the more surprising in the case of Austria, which is often left out of accounts of interwar modernism in Central Europe, yet built strongly on its alpine geography after the First World War in the realm of art and visual culture.[10] This book challenges this omission: setting rural modernism in focus, it sheds light on the broader impact of the countryside and regional towns on modern art and visual culture. Assessing paintings, prints, photographs, and images from the illustrated press, it argues that rural modernism held a significant stake in identity-building processes of artistic renewal in the 1920s and 1930s and shows that this was especially pertinent to post-imperial Austria.

By and large, histories of Central European modernism focus on the avant-gardes of urban centres such as Budapest, Prague, and Vienna and, in doing so, omit a crucial part of the developments beyond the metropolis.[11] Often, this approach is accompanied by an additional normative framework, methodological nationalism, which causes artistic developments to be recognised only insofar as they are confined to and aligned with specific national spaces. Under the umbrella term 'Central European modernism',

Figure 0.2 Karel Plicka. Film still from *The Earth Sings*, 1933. Slovenský filmový ústav – Národný filmový archív, Bratislava.

we thus find a plethora of nationally framed developments such as 'Czech cubism', 'Austrian expressionism', or 'Hungarian fauvism' – movements which represent 'a notion of culture enclosed within the territorial formation of the modern nation'.[12] At the same time, the 'rediscovery' of regional modernisms across the region has increased in recent years, driven by local scholarship in smaller towns and 'second cities'.[13] Yet regional modernism in these cases is presented as modern *despite* their provinciality, looking towards links to artistic centres rather than assessing what it meant for a regional culture within modernity to arise. Here, this book intercepts: linking a series of case studies and drawing out recurrent themes that stood in dialogue or competition with each other, it presents regional and rural modernism as an interconnected phenomenon that reached across the political and social spectrum. It was shaped and presented not just in the provinces but also in much broader debates and cultural and political networks.

After establishing some of the central parameters of Austrian rural modernism in the first three chapters, the following chapters bring in comparable developments in Czechoslovakia and Hungary to emphasise that, rather than signifying isolation, rural modernism was a source for dynamic exchange across Central Europe. It traces how rural modernism fluctuated between idealised views of a 'local exotic' and a repositioning of modernity to the countryside through tourism, exhibitionary practices and leftist cultural movements. Beyond a drive to 'nationalise' art in reference to rural areas, therefore, rural modernism offers an approach to move beyond national frameworks and, in doing so, helps to recuperate polyphonic developments. The book pays particular attention to cultural developments in Austria for two main reasons: first, Austria is rarely integrated into more comprehensive histories of Central European modernism beyond a focus on Vienna 1900.[14] Uncomfortably wedged between the positioning as a minor offshoot of German culture or as a cultural wasteland outside of 'Red Vienna', the country's exclusion from broader artistic developments in the region implicitly confirms narratives that the interwar years in Austria were an era of isolation and artistic drought, encapsulated in titles such as *The Lost Austrians 1918–1938* (1982); *Lost Modernity: The Hagen Artists' Association, 1918–1938* (1993); and *Uncertain Hope: Austrian Painting and Graphic Design, 1918–1938* (1993).[15] Only in more recent years, attempts to reconsider this perspective with the inclusion of previously understudied topics have taken shape, even though they have exclusively focused on Vienna.[16] By reconsidering rural variants of interwar Austrian art and visual culture and their relation to developments in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, this book challenges the national and urban exclusivity that dominates these accounts.[17]

Second, cultural developments in interwar Austria particularly lend themselves for a critical engagement with the role of rural modernism in Central Europe, because the alpine landscape became such a defining feature of the country after 1918. Its presence permeated all areas of culture: even before the Austrofascist regime (1933/1934–1938), which emphasised Austria's rural character, the Alps became a central feature of the post-imperial state and were explored by artists from different social and cultural backgrounds.[18] Some of them were not 'first-rank' modernists and thus have fallen outside the predominant scopes of inquiry. Others worked in 'minor' media or in the popular realm, meaning that their work reached high visibility yet fit uneasily within modernist artistic circles. By introducing their work, the book thus also draws attention to artists of little familiarity to international audiences, whose activities were tied to regional artistic developments such as 'Tyrol modernism' and connections to the Salzburg Festival, folk-inspired fashion and graphic design, the growing popularity of alpinism and alpine tourism, and amateur photography movements that played a crucial role in developing an identifiable image of the Austrian countryside within the framework of modernity. In doing so, the chapters stress the fluidity between 'high' and 'popular' culture that rural-inspired images enabled, recalling Janet Galligani Casey's emphasis on the 'rural' as a significant location in modern culture:

> If urbanity seemed to be the territory of the avant-garde, rurality was aligned firmly with more accessible structures and images, and hence with broader audiences. This may have hindered its acceptance in the most exalted aesthetic circles, […] but it nonetheless reflected and reinforced the fascination that rurality still held for a swiftly urbanizing nation.[19]

Taking this into account, the book underlines that a shift of attention from the metropolis, as a central location of modernity, to the countryside allows an expansion of our understanding of Central European modernity in the visual arts in which 'the rural' played a defining role.

The countryside, the rural, and the region: Frameworks

This is not a book about folk art. Instead, it deals with the ways in which rural cultures have been adopted in modern art and visual culture in the decades between the two World Wars. Notions of 'the rural' and 'regionalism' stand in focus as ideological concepts that challenge assumptions of modernity as an intrinsically urban phenomenon. The different visualisations of the countryside in modern Austrian culture show the rural as a space that is 'a socially produced set of manifolds', denoting not one but many meanings that are 'created in a whole series of forms and at a whole series of scales by social individuals'.[20] Now as ever, there is little consent as to the definition of the 'rural' in contrast to what an urban space entails. Geographer Keith Halfacree has included in his definitions 'countryside, wilderness, outback, periphery, farm belt, village, hamlet, bush, peasant society, pastoral, garden, unincorporated territory, open space'.[21] Considering this range of locations and their different meanings, 'the rural' emerges as 'organizational mental constructs which guide us towards what is "visible" and must be responded to, relate appearance and reality, and even define reality itself'.[22] In other words, 'the rural' is produced through exchange processes, constantly changing based on a conceptual, interdependent triad of perceived, conceived and lived space.[23] Challenging its perception as a fixed category that is 'natural' or 'given', in contrast to the socially produced space of the city, 'the rural' in this light becomes a fluid category and it is precisely for this reason that its visual construction within modern culture was at once highly recognisable and took on many different forms.[24] Based on this flexibility of 'the rural', the main term used in this book to encompass the material discussed will be 'rural modernism'. In line with its understanding of 'the rural' as a discursive space, moreover, the book not only considers works of art and visual culture and their producers, but also their circulation and reception in the public space in an approach focused on networks, intersections, and exchanges that shaped Central European art and visual culture beyond metropolitan spaces yet stood in constant interaction with them.

A second key term in this regard is 'regional modernism', which originated in architecture at the turn of the twentieth century as a critique of international modernism that was perceived to erase any sense of local colour.[25] To preserve a local sense of identity, traditional craftsmanship and building elements were introduced to offer a sense of continuity between modern society and traditional life.[26] With the concept of 'critical regionalism', moreover, Kenneth Frampton has argued that self-conscious approaches to regionalist culture had the potential to oppose a nostalgic vernacular built on emotive, sentimentalising terms. 'Critical regionalism' thus built a symbiotic relationship between local and international elements, which informed and shaped each other.[27] They could thus be simultaneously locally engaged and modern without falling into a populist vernacular. The literature on regional modernism is extensive, exploring these phenomena alongside intersections of what was deemed 'urban-modern' and what was 'rural-traditional', their relation to regional and national identities, and their implementation across the political spectrum. It has shed light on the strong position of tradition as an element within modern culture and shows that the concepts of 'rural' and 'urban'

are constructed in a dialectical relationship, forged from the perspective of the urban intelligentsia.[28]

Regional modernism has challenged perceptions of modernism as a metropolitan and uniform international phenomenon.[29] Across Europe, regionalism, as a location-specific formulation of culture in reaction against the perceived loss of local identity due to processes of modernisation, gained great visibility by the late nineteenth century.[30] By the early twentieth century, it had become an 'integrative force' of nation-building.[31] In his study of the culture of regionalism in France, Spain and Germany, Eric Storm has argued that regionalism was 'a response of innovative national intellectual elites to new, international artistic, cultural and political trends and not among reformist elites from provincial towns'.[32] As I argue in this book, this trend was also highly visible in Austrian interwar culture. It brings to light a different way of reading Austrian modernism as deeply rooted within the tensions of Vienna and the provinces. Neal Alexander and James Moran have emphasised that 'a deeper understanding of the tensions between transnational circulations and regional locations will allow for more flexible models of modernism's complex and contradictory manifestations'.[33] Provincial settings, they argue, functioned as the catalyst for internationalist and cosmopolitan sensibilities. In Austria, where the collapse of the empire and the deaths of some of Viennese modernism's most revered artists, Egon Schiele (1890–1918) and Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), coincided in 1918, provincial settings offered the opportunity for a cultural revival after shockwaves of social, political and cultural crises. Accordingly, rural and regional modernism functioned as part of a broader aim to come to terms with shifting relations of power. As a broadly staged inquiry across different media shows, regional and rural modernism offered flexible registers to respond to Austria's altered geopolitical situation. This not only led to a reconceptualisation of Austrian identity after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire but also built links to former successor states and allowed a new generation of artists to find their own idiom in a world 'after' Klimt and Schiele.

Rural-urban dichotomies and the potential of the region

In their definitions of the consequences of modernisation and industrialisation of society, the rural/urban dichotomy has been defined in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by influential thinkers such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Ferdinand Tonnies, and Max Weber.[34] Their work has established the city as a forward-looking and ever-developing place, the countryside, as its diametric opposite, as a place of the 'past', defined by stability and tradition. In their assessment of the dichotomies between city and countryside, Kristin Bluemel and Michael McCluskey have emphasised that the urban middle-class ideal of 'the rural' is but the tip of a much more comprehensive range of negotiations about the role of the rural in twentieth-century culture.[35] Their call for a close reassessment of the multiplicity of meanings of the rural within modernity is especially pertinent to Central Europe. Widely dominated by national revival movements in the late nineteenth century, the role of the countryside has long been informed by its definitions as a middle-class idea of the archaic rural idyll. On this basis, the countryside has primarily been addressed in scholarship about turn-of-the-century national revival movements, where the appropriation of and borrowing from rural and folk culture led to the development of new visual forms and styles.[36] Rather than vanishing after 1918, these aspects remained strong points of reference within the altered geopolitical framework of post-Habsburg Central Europe. Indeed, within the new nation-states, the rural-urban

dichotomy gained heightened visibility as the new territories had to be consolidated. Beyond Budapest, Prague and Vienna, the new state territories of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary all contained considerable rural areas. In Austria, the difference between Vienna, home to a quarter of the country's population, was also marked by a demographic divide, quickly instrumentalised by reactionary forces. Vienna was presented 'as a dangerous "Jewish" metropolis – superficial, ugly, crass, corrupt, depraved, socialist, capitalist, materialist, decadent, modern and immoral'.[37] The countryside, by contrast, represented an idealised German space, eventually leading to restrictions such as the *Trachtenverbot* (1938), which barred Jews from wearing traditional Austrian dress.[38] Yet what these divisions between cosmopolitan-urban (Jewish) and rural-traditional (German) spaces overlooked was that the countryside was not, as Halfacree has emphasised, a 'natural given', but significantly shaped by the urban middle-class, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. The Jewish-Hungarian historian and sociologist Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957), who was active in Budapest's progressive intellectual circles until emigrating to Vienna in 1918 and later to the United States, shaped a strong impression of the countryside as a nostalgic island of the past:

> Though the railway is near them, and motor cars pass through the villages, the internal culture of Eastern Slovakia remains entirely medieval, based exclusively on tradition and religion. What we, not without a certain arrogance, fondly call 'modern culture' has never touched them and is only slowly beginning to penetrate.[39]

Drawing an image of a backwards forgotten land for an international urban readership, Jászi described eastern Czechoslovakia as 'the Cinderella of the old Hungary [that] caused the new Czechoslovak Republic many anxieties, for it is surrounded by a thicket of misery, illiteracy and superstition'.[40] Even as an educated, modern man of science, Jászi 'found it hard to resist the charm of the truly biblical atmosphere which surrounds these people', emphasising the region's sociological value as a place lost in time, that should be studied and preserved.[41] In a nutshell, Jászi revisited arguments established at the turn of the twentieth century about the need to preserve rural traditions against the pending 'threat' of modernity in the broader Central European cultural space in a new era, which inevitably altered life in the city and the countryside.

The Austrian-Jewish journalist Anton Kuh (1890–1941) on the other hand warned of the negative influence of the countryside to the city in 1923: 'Politics are bringing in the air of the mountains and alpine pastures, the wooden waft of barns […] This is the spirit of Schladming, of Unterhollersbach and St Kathrein'.[42] In this often-cited column for the Viennese newspaper *Die Stunde*, Kuh describes the shift of Vienna as an imperial capital at the Danube to a Vienna which became 'no more than a simple capital' with the empire's collapse. In light of the city's repositioning from the 'prosperous, forward-looking plains' to the 'oppressive mountain landscape' of a small alpine state, Kuh warned of the ideological changes caused by the collapse of the empire: with the symbolic transformation of Vienna by the Danube' to 'Vienna by the mountains', he saw an impending rural threat to the metropolis, based on conservative politics, a preference for a singular, national folk culture and provincial towns. For Kuh, Vienna was under siege by provincial backwardness.[43] Though written tongue-in-cheek, the commentary marks a common concern of his time: that Vienna had lost its glory after the Habsburg Empire's collapse, and that the new, small, and primarily alpine formation of the Austrian state would quell all progress and openness.[44]

Jászi and Kuh's positions exemplify the varying levels of exchange and perception of rural and urban culture in interwar Central Europe. In their juxtaposition, they map a fascination with this relationship, which was far from stable and continued to be renegotiated in close reference to the altered geopolitical set-up of the region after 1918. Taking this as a point of departure, this book considers the interwar years as a time when the binary of city and countryside, modernity, and tradition, increasingly collapsed in the face of new social and political challenges. Analysing the position of the countryside not only as an ideal but also as an active cultural agent, it asks: How did the dichotomy between rural and urban culture impact the work of modern artists? How did they challenge and redevelop ideas about the countryside in light of the geopolitical changes caused by the empire's collapse? What functions did 'the rural' have in modern art and visual culture, and how successfully was it conveyed across different factions?

Facets of 'the rural' in interwar art and visual culture: Chapter outlines

Analysing different approaches to regional and rural modernism in art and visual culture in Central Europe, the structure of this book follows both a thematic and a chronological order. It assesses case studies from both the fine arts and popular visual culture in Austria between 1918 and 1938 and sets them in relation to developments in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Chapter 1 analyses attempts to establish regional artistic centres after 1918 to gain artistic independence from the metropolis (Vienna), and to shape a new art within the process of post-war regeneration. It addresses the initial shifts in artists' perception of the countryside as a place of rejuvenation after 1918 and analyses calls for the regional autonomy of culture. With a close assessment of cultural projects in Salzburg, the chapter traces how a departure from Vienna by several successful artists was seen as a drive to diversify, renew and consolidate modern Austrian art. The broader consequences of this development are addressed in Chapter 2, which focuses on the construction of popular modern imagery of the countryside through regional, national and international exhibitions. The reductive lens of exhibitions formulated a recognisable image of specific provinces that would become national identifiers in international cultural exchanges. While this development was particularly reinforced after the accession of the Austrofascist regime in 1933/1934, the chapter highlights that this process began much earlier. It pays special attention to exhibitions such as 'Tyrolean artists', shown in different locations in Germany, Vienna and Budapest in 1927, as well as the Austrian exhibition in London (1934) and the Austrian representation at the Brussels (1935) and Paris (1937) World's Fairs. By tracing recurring themes relating to the countryside, as well as artists and organisers that repeatedly participated in these exhibitions, the chapter emphasises that the countryside not only became a central point of definition for Austrian identity but also played a central role in the country's presentation as modern and tourist-oriented. The importance of tourism in developing a modern image of the countryside is the focus of Chapter 3. It assesses the work of artists, photographers and designers who contributed to the 'selling' of rural areas as places of adventure and rejuvenation to local and international audiences. In the process, some regions, such as Tyrol, became idiomatic for a masculine, adventurous holiday, while depictions of the Salzkammergut underline alternative attempts to present the area as 'authentically rural' yet fashionable through the eyes of young women artists. An analysis of works by artists including Alfons Walde, Lisl Weil, and Erni Kniepert shows how the art and visual culture related to tourism, travel, and holidaymaking forged competing images of rural

modernity in which the position of its producers played a vital role. Chapter 4 shifts attention to rural modernism as a growing phenomenon in mass culture. It traces the modernisation of rural imagery in line with nationalist thought with particular attention to the genre of *Heimat* ('homeland') photography and examines how it accelerated the production of idealised images of the countryside.[45] Mediating between the work of artist-photographers such as Rudolf Koppitz and Karel Plicka and a broad base of amateur photographers who were encouraged to take their own *Heimat* photographs, the chapter shows how, through modern technology and styles, the countryside was transformed into a contemporary yet 'timeless' fantasy. The chapter also draws on connections between rural photography in Austria and Czechoslovakia to show that *Heimat* photography was much more wide-ranging than an exclusive focus on its development within German and Austrian reactionary politics would allow. Chapter 5 shows that rural areas also became a contested site for leftist political agitation as a counterpoint to the 'beautiful countryside' popularised through *Heimat* photography. With a focus on leftist illustrated magazines, *Der Kuckuck* and *Der jugendliche Arbeiter*, it traces the difficulties of constructing agitational images and the modernist strategies employed to build these images. It also draws attention to exchanges between different leftist youth and tourist organisations, such as the *Naturfreunde*, and shows that practices of cross-referencing meant that these images circulated across Central Europe. Considering reportages and photo essays, the chapter analyses the role of these counter-images that employed modern technology as a revelatory instrument. Drawing on the contradictive nature of activist and touristic photographs, it highlights the problems arising from the firmly established image of the 'beautiful countryside' in light of leftist political agitation. Expanding notions of the rural beyond the alpine space thereby draws attention to transnational exchanges in Central Europe, while making evident that different ideologies were projected on different rural spaces within Austria. Chapter 6 extends the discussion of the countryside as a place of alterity by analysing its exoticisation in relation to Central Europe's most marginalised minority, the Roma. It argues that Central European artists sought out Roma communities to engage with a local form of 'exotic' culture in the rural space. In the process, they constructed a form of rural modernism that replicated modernism's 'fascination' for non-European cultures within the region, showing that the racialisation of rural minorities exoticised the countryside as an easily accessible 'Other'. The chapter also draws attention to Roma representation in the illustrated press, where similar motifs of 'civilisation' and 'savagery' were extended amid growing social and political tensions. Just as the countryside was constructed as a *Heimat* for the nation, therefore, the chapter shows that it simultaneously represented a 'wild exotic' in reference to subaltern minorities. Assessing these polyphonic interpretations of 'the rural' in modern Austrian art and visual culture and how these related to and intersected with broader Central European culture, the book ultimately shows that, by moving beyond metropolitan spaces, Central European modernism becomes more inclusive of its own cultural, social and political margins.

Notes

1 Hans Marboe, *Book of Austria* (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1948), 3.
2 Marboe, *Book of Austria,* x.
3 Gundolf Graml, *Revisiting Austria: Tourism, Space, and National Identity, 1945 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn, 2020).

4 Piotr Piotrowski, 'Towards a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde', in *Europa! Europa? The Avant-Garde, Modernism and the Fate of a Continent*, Sascha Bru, et al. eds. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2009), 49–58. Matthew Rampley, 'Networks, Horizons, Centres and Hierarchies: On the Challenges of Writing on Modernism in Central Europe', *Umění/Art* 69:2 (2021), 145–62.

5 Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, *Imaging and Mapping Eastern Europe: Sarmatia Europea to Post-Communist Bloc* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 6. See also Maria Todorova, 'The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of East-European Nationalism', *Slavic Review* 64:1 (Spring 2005), 140–64.

6 Beáta Hock, Klara Kemp-Welch, and Jonathan Owen 'Introduction', in *Reader in East-Central-European Modernism 1918–1956*, eds. Beáta Hock, Klara Kemp-Welch, and Jonathan Owen (London: Courtauld Books Online, 2019). https://courtauld.ac.uk/research/research-resources/publications/courtauld-books-online/a-reader-in-east-central-european-modernism-1918-1956/introduction/

7 Beáta Hock, Klara Kemp-Welch, and Jonathan Owen. 'Introduction', in *Reader in East-Central-European Modernism,* eds. Beáta Hock, Klara Kemp-Welch, and Jonathan Owen (London: Courtauld Books Online, 2019).

8 Jonathan Owen, 'Old Worlds and the New Vision: The Ethnographic Modernism of Karel Plicka's The Earth Sings (1933)', in *Reader in East-Central-European Modernism 1918–1956*. Katarína Bajcurová, 'Balancing "Absolute Painting" and Reality: Ľudovít Fulla and the Paradoxes of Slovak Modernism', in Hock et al., *Reader in East-Central-European Modernism*. Rebecca Houze, 'The Art and Design of Anna Lesznai: Adaptation and Transformation', in *Jews and Cultural Identity in Central European Modernism*, ed. Elana Shapira (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 173–86.

9 Marta Filipová, *Modernity, History, and Politics in Czech Art* (London: Routledge, 2019). Tomáš Winter and Pavla Machalíková, *Jdi na venkov! Výtvarné umění a lidová kultura v českých zemích 1800–1960* (Prague: Artefactum, 2019). Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars (*New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

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1 Dreams of Autonomy
Regionalism as Post-War Regeneration

After the official end of the First World War on 11 November 1918, the emerging nation-states left behind a past of monarchy and imperialism and moved towards an uncertain democratic future. The shift of power relations between the new republics of German-Austria and Czechoslovakia was significant: of the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire, the Austrian Republic only inherited a fraction of the population and territory and lost much of its industry to Czechoslovakia, leading to wide discontent, disorientation and desperation.[1] The question 'Who are we Austrians?' was a crucial part of this situation, wavering between justifications for the eventual *Anschluss* to National Socialist Germany in March 1938 and the vacuum created by the transformation of an empire to a small democratic republic of 6.2 million citizens. Especially in the capital, Vienna, where many soldiers, officials, and refugees from remote parts of the empire arrived, the situation was defined by extreme hunger, poverty and housing shortages.[2] Overwhelmed by territorial loss and the financial burdens imposed by the Allies, Austria was one of the definitive losers of the war. How did this impact the country's artistic landscape?

In popular visual culture, the sense of loss could hardly be bypassed. Josef Danilowatz's caricature 'Renovated Austria' (Figure 1.1) on the cover of the humorous illustrated *Die Muskete* from January 1923 shows the heads of state of the Allies looking upon a little creature without legs and a potbelly, wearing a jug on his head and a hammer and run-down armour as prostheses. A Habsburg emblem dangles on a thin thread from his torn shirt. The figure is set in soft light, which seems to be emanating from him, while the Allies merge with the darkness of the background. As they look upon the grotesque little figure beneath them, the capture below the image reads: 'If he cannot move properly like this, he cannot be helped'. The caricature mocked the Allies' support of war-torn Austria, implying just how insufficient it was: rather than alleviating Austria's desperate situation, they turned it into something grotesque and ridiculous. For the bigger powers, the caricature suggests, 'Invalid Austria' was nothing more than an experiment, unable to defend itself. This position found particular pertinence in Vienna, where *Die Muskete* was published. Its publication date, January 1923, reflects that the country still found itself in an economic crisis at this time, which would only stabilise at the end of the following year.[3]

The difficult economic situation, social unrest, and dire living conditions were also acutely felt by artists residing in Vienna at the time. In the words of the Hungarian émigré artist Lajos Kassák (1887–1967), the Austrian capital was a 'downtrodden city of invalid veterans', with limited opportunities.[4] Although numerous artists from Hungary arrived after the collapse of the Soviet Republic of Councils in Hungary (1919), comparatively few stayed permanently, and emigration among Austrian artists was widespread. Indeed, the

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-2

Figure 1.1 Josef Danilowatz. 'Renovated Austria', *Die Muskete*, 36:3 (20 January 1923), cover. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

wider sense of loss and impoverishment that held a grip on the country also found some pertinent parallels in art and culture. The deaths of some of Vienna's most significant artists, Egon Schiele (1890–1918), Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), and Kolomann Moser (1868–1918), consolidated the symbolic end of an era which was quickly recognised by contemporaries as a decisive rupture in Austrian art historiography, matching the socio-political shifts caused by the collapse of the empire. In particular, the young Schiele's death led to many memorial exhibitions and publications in the early 1920s. The artist became a central focus among his successors.[5] In 1923, art critic Fritz Karpfen remarked, 'It is symptomatic that almost every young artist stands or stood under Schiele's spell.… They continue his work through their work and crystalise it by their specifications—Schiele has become the focus of contemporary art'.[6] This assessment did not weigh in the younger artists' favour: characterised by a striking diversity in styles and a strong sense of caution toward artistic experimentation, Austrian art after 1918 became a pluralist, undefinable post scriptum to the art of the previous decades. The young artist Carry Hauser (1895–1985) likened it to an exhibition 'which makes it seem as if time had stood still since the turn of the century'.[7] Meanwhile, art historian Hans Tietze, an enthusiastic supporter of modernist art, remarked in 1918, 'From the point of view of the isolation that we got ourselves in and that made our artistic life much poorer than that of medium-sized German cities, there has arisen the wrong perception of local production; a terrible overestimation of outworn conventions as well as approaches to modernity'.[8]

Amid these stifling conditions and pessimistic outlook, finding a new location for Austrian art was seen by many as the most viable option. The solution was quickly found in the provinces. Discussing the state of Austrian culture after the First World War, the writer Erwin Weill noted in 1922: 'After the collapse [of the Habsburg Empire], when one thought that there would no longer be any special interest in art and literature […] we suddenly gained proof that this deceased art experienced a renaissance in the provinces'.[9] Similarly, Bruno Grimschitz, curator at Vienna's Belvedere gallery, suggested that 'the withered ground of the city centrifugally disperses talent to the periphery […] so that, perhaps, the unspent power of the provinces gives new force to bring a new Austrian painting into prominence'.[10] By the early 1920s, the search for artistic renewal outside Vienna was well underway. In a letter to art critic Arthur Rössler from April 1919, the painter Anton Faistauer (1887–1930) emphasised: 'My last visit clearly revealed the confusion of artistic Vienna to me, and I think it would be easier to bear Bolshevik Munich than this wholly corrupt, oozy metropole. For my work, too, I see no further opportunities [there] because I am not working towards a pointedly intellectual but a more meaningful development'.[11] When writing this letter, Faistauer was already a visitor from Salzburg, where his quest for 'more meaningful development' became a vital part of cultural regeneration.

Salzburg was the city that profited most from the unfavourable conditions in post-war Vienna.[12] The reasons for this had both practical and ideological bases. Salzburg was well connected to Vienna and Munich and geographically located at the centre of the new republic. It was also a historic, picturesque city near the Salzkammergut lake district, a favourite holiday location among the Viennese nobility and upper classes since the nineteenth century.[13] Demographically, too, Salzburg appeared to represent the 'new' Austria more than Vienna did: most of its citizens were German-Austrian and Catholic, and as such, not only corresponded closely with the majority citizens of the new Austrian Republic overall but could stand in as a model for a unified Austrian nation at a time when the very possibility of existence for an independent state was repeatedly put in question.[14]

Not least, the deaths of many Salzburg artists during the First World War left a sore vacuum in a small environment waiting to be filled.[15]

Considering the small city as an example of how artists' relocation from the metropolis after the First World War led to the dispersion of modern culture, this chapter analyses the attempt to establish a regional artistic centre in Salzburg after 1918. Specifically, it traces how established cultural figures and a new generation of young artists chose Salzburg as a place for artistic regeneration in the years following the empire's collapse. Tied in with the famous Salzburg Festival, artists and associations such as *Der Wassermann* and its follow-up, the *Sonderbund*, found in Salzburg a crucial new location for Austrian culture. In contrast to other new artistic centres in the provinces that arose because of the geopolitical changes caused by the collapse of the Habsburg Empire but were relatively short-lived, such as Košice in eastern Czechoslovakia, the chapter argues that Salzburg represented the development of a permanent regional centre, which quickly gained national significance in the new Austrian Republic and beyond.[16] In this sense, while regional emancipation was felt across the Central European art scene after 1918, giving new cultural significance to cities and smaller towns such as Košice and the new Slovak capital Bratislava, Brno, and České Budĕvovice in Czechoslovakia, or Szeged and Szentendre in Hungary, Salzburg's claim to challenging one of the old cultural centres (Vienna) in the region was unparalleled. The main reason for this was its advantageous geographic and ideological positioning within republican Austria.

The Salzburg festival, *Der Wassermann* and Austrian art after the empire

A small Baroque city and former archbishopric located in Austria's western province of the same name, Salzburg became an essential location of Austrian culture during the 1920s with a lasting effect. Indeed, historian Michael Burri has argued that Salzburg 'acquired a symbolic authority during the First Austrian Republic that continues to ensure its privileged place in Austrian politics and culture to this day'.[17] The key to manifesting this position was the Salzburg Festival, a celebration of music and drama, which continues to occur annually in the summer months of July and August. Inaugurated in 1920 under the direction and ideological conceptualisation of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Max Reinhardt, the festival was an attempt to manifest a 'contemporary realisation of a specifically "Austrian" heritage', while asserting the country's position in post-war Europe as a *Kulturnation* ('nation of culture').[18] The Salzburg Festival was one of several such projects in interwar Central Europe. Others included the *Meisteraufführungen Wiener Musik* ('Virtuoso Performances of Viennese Music'), inaugurated in 1920, the *Massenfestspiele* ('Festival for the Masses') organised by Vienna's Social Democrats in 1931, and the festivals of music and drama in Szeged and Pécs, Hungary.[19] Among these, the Salzburg Festival was undoubtedly the most successful: not only did it reach higher international visibility within the first decade of its existence and left a mark in the reconceptualisation of Austrian post-imperial identity at home and abroad, but it also continued to take place almost without interruption into the twenty-first century and became a central point of organisation for the city's cultural life and international visibility.

Beyond the focus on music and drama and its uses in forging a 'sense of community and collective emotional fellowship', the festival provided an essential background to reformulations of Austrian art, especially in the early years of the Republic.[20] Links between the festival and the visual arts were strong from the start: in January 1919, a group of cultural figures who had relocated from Vienna to Salzburg during or just after wartime founded a new artists' association, the *Neue Vereinigung bildender Künstler in Salzburg*.

Der Wassermann ('New Association of fine artists in Salzburg. Aquarius').[21] Despite the suggestion of the name as a 'fine arts' association, the group was conceived to be interdisciplinary at its outset: the painter Felix Albrecht Harta (1884–1967) was responsible for the fine arts section, the renowned illustrator Alfred Kubin (1877–1959) for the graphic arts, writer Stefan Zweig – known today for his nostalgic Habsburg novel *The World of Yesterday* (1941) – for the literature section, while Bernhard Paumgartner, a conductor and co-founder of the Salzburg Festival, headed the music section.[22] All of these figures had begun their careers in Vienna, yet saw in Salzburg the place where they could found a group that, as Harta noted, was motivated 'by the joint yearning to create a musical Austria from what was left of the country'.[23] This claim for Salzburg as the representative of Austrian culture could build on a longer history. As early as 1900, the writer Hermann Bahr, a key supporter of *Der Wassermann* and one of the defenders of the Viennese Secession at the turn of the twentieth century, published 'The Capital of Europe: A Salzburg Fantasy', in which he wrote in a dream-like sequence, 'then we moved here and finally found the capital of Europe'.[24] Along these lines, modern Salzburg culture was to be constructed as a necessary impulse for Austrian art. It offered a viable departure from the dominating figures of Austrian modernism before 1918 and a geographical distance from an imperial past to which the image of Vienna remained tied.

The ideological grounding of the Salzburg Festival most clearly realised this challenge to Viennese hegemony. As historian Michael P. Steinberg has argued, Hofmannsthal conceived of it as a model for a new Austrian identity, which was ostensibly cosmopolitan yet simultaneously grounded in Catholic, Baroque and German culture: 'Its purpose was the rediscovery and reconstitution of a transcendent Austrian cultural heritage which would help to bridge the gulf that separated the empire from the small Austrian Republic'.[25] With this ideal of 'nationalist cosmopolitanism', the festival incorporated many of the contradictions that defined Austrian interwar culture, fluctuating between a conservative element, and a drive to consolidate pan-European ideals as the ideal Habsburg legacy. Thus, despite an attempt to maintain international connections, the Salzburg Festival was simultaneously linked with ideals to preserve local tradition and 'eternal values', most clearly expressed in *Jedermann* ('Everyman'), a play by Hofmannsthal, which has served as the festival's inauguration piece since its opening in August 1920.[26]

Since the founding of *Der Wassermann* preceded the opening of the Salzburg Festival by one year and some of its members were involved in both, the group was not only closely related to the festival but tied in with it at its very foundations, and was thus inseparable from the reinvention of Salzburg as 'the capital of Europe'.[27] Moreover, the fact that *Der Wassermann* was by and large represented by artists who had been part of Vienna's most progressive circles before their relocation, the move to Salzburg and its reinvention as the city that hosted cultural regeneration ought to be seen as a reconstitution of what modern Austrian art represented, intrinsically tied to its relocation to the provinces.

Relocating Viennese modernism: Faistauer, Harta, and the legacy of the *Neukunstgruppe*

Having chosen its name from the astrological sign Aquarius as a symbol for 'the resurrection of light', *Der Wassermann* was to represent a hopeful start to a new era in Austrian art, which emphasised Salzburg's advantageous position as a 'bridge between Austria and the rest of southern Germany'.[28] Despite these proclamations for a new beginning, *Der Wassermann* continued artistic networks founded a decade earlier in Vienna. The founding of *Der Wassermann* was initiated by Harta, who moved to Salzburg from Vienna after

serving as a war painter for the Habsburg army in Bosnia and on the Galician front.[29] He had secured connections to influential cultural figures, including Zweig, Bahr, Reinhardt and Hofmannsthal. Harta, too, encouraged the participation of his close associate Faistauer, who served in Vienna during the war yet was originally from Maishofen, a small town near Salzburg. With the two artists, *Der Wassermann* was tied to one of Vienna's most prominent artist groups before 1918: the *Neukunstgruppe* ('New Art Group'). Founded by 15 young artists who collectively left Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts in 1909 to find more artistic freedom away from the academy's conservative values, the *Neukunstgruppe*'s core members included Schiele, Faistauer, Albert Paris Gütersloh (1887–1973), Anton Kolig (1886–1950), and Robin Christian Andersen (1890–1969). Harta joined the group in the same year. Praised as bringing 'the fresh air of spring' to Austrian art, the group represented the torchbearers of Viennese modernism before the First World War.[30] Although the artists' collaboration was based mainly on joint exhibitions, several of them also shared close friendships, referenced in paintings such as Schiele's *Friends* (*Round Table*, 1918) (Figure 1.2), which depicts Harta, Schiele and Faistauer alongside Gütersloh, and the painter Georg Merkel (1881–1976) in a composition referring to the Last Supper.[31]

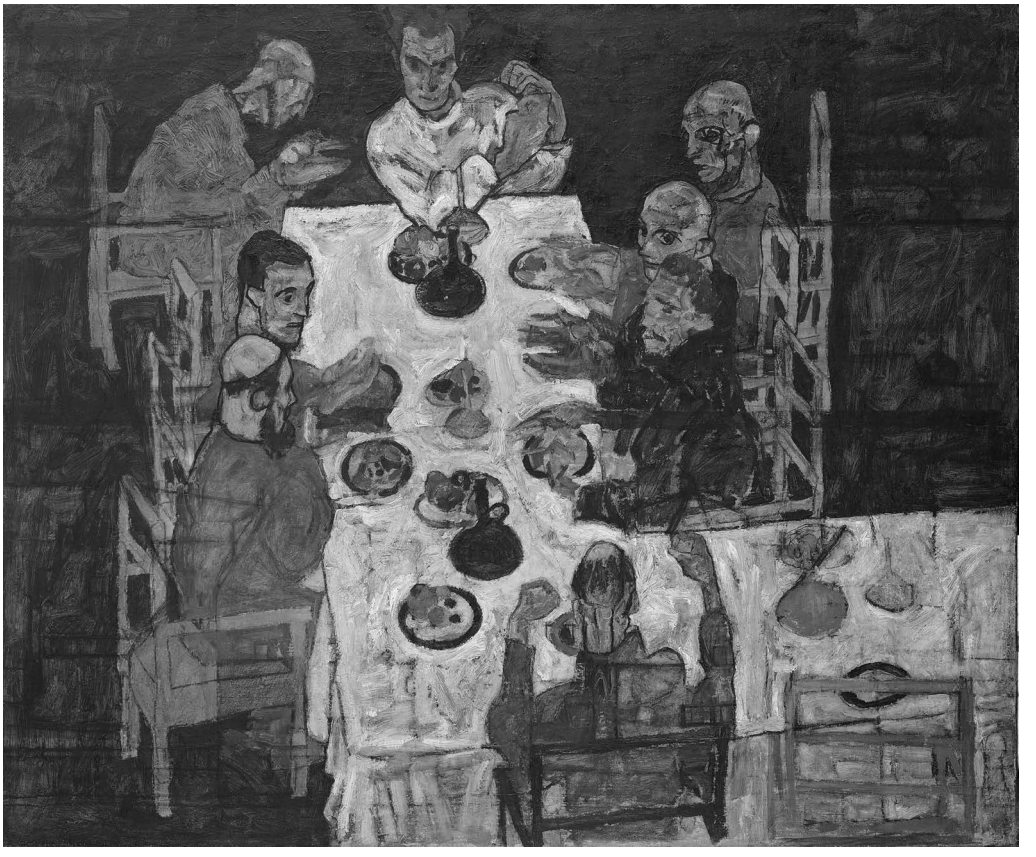

Figure 1.2 Egon Schiele. *The Friends (Round Table)*, 1918. Oil on canvas. Private collection, Cincinnati, US. © Bridgeman images.

Most *Neukunstgruppe* artists worked in a similar style, best known today by Kokoschka and Schiele's raw expressionism. Harta and Faistauer also used a similar form treatment with rough brushwork (Figure 1.3). Faistauer's *Rider and Marching Column* (1918), painted during military service, exemplifies this so-called 'colour expressionism', which became the artist's dominant style during the 1910s.[32] Harta, a famous portraitist, adopted a similar manner of work. His portrait of Alois Grasmayr (1918) shows the Salzburg writer and hotelier in half-profile in a dynamic, colourful style with broad brushstrokes. Harta consolidated this style by the time he moved to Salzburg. Faistauer also maintained his sombre expressionism, yet while Harta predominantly drew on the work of older Spanish masters such as Goya and El Greco, Faistauer's main point of reference was Cezanne.[33] In this sense, both artists continued a pan-European expressionist style, in which the Salzburg location regularly appeared as a motif but did not come with particular formal innovations. In other words, in contrast to other locations, such as Tyrol, Salzburg modernism did not show *formal* specificities. Rather than a recognisable local style, it was, on a practical level, the (semi-)permanent relocation to the provinces and the founding of *Der Wassermann* that represented the most significant contributions to interwar regional modernism in these early stages of development.

Indeed, all surviving members of the *Neukunstgruppe* maintained their established styles after 1918, and those who remained active in Austria, first and foremost Faistauer,

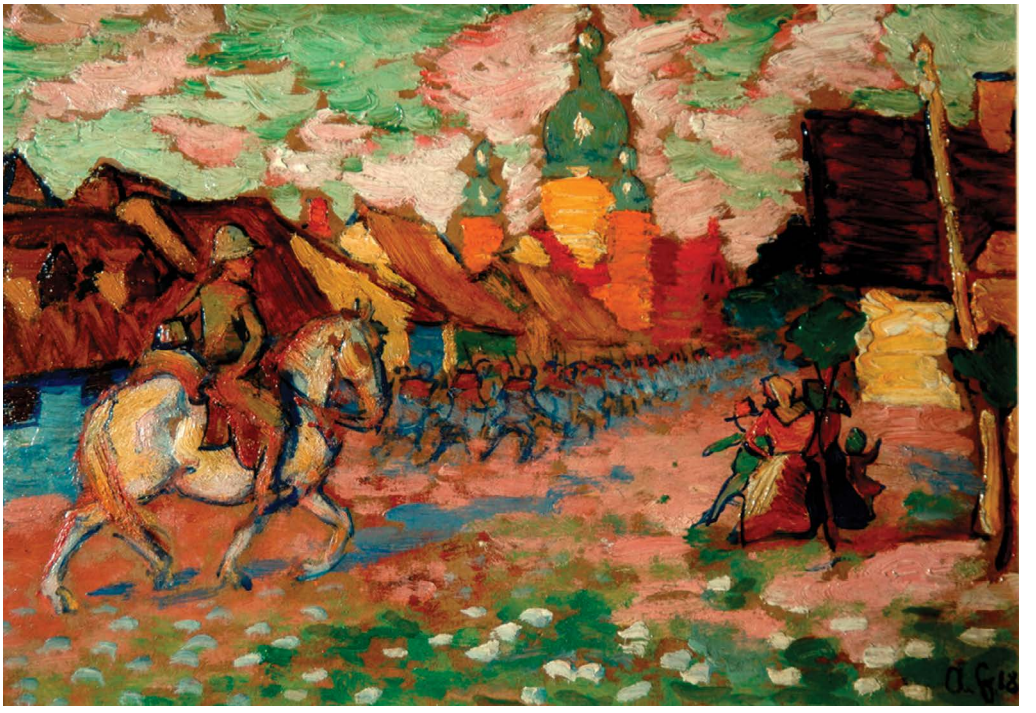

Figure 1.3 Anton Faistauer. *Riders and marching column*, 1918. Oil on Canvas. Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:HGM_Faistauer_Reiter_und_Marschkolonne.jpg

Harta and Kolig, did so outside Vienna. While Harta and Faistauer moved to Salzburg, Kolig relocated to rural Carinthia, where he was one of the founding members of the Nötsch circle of expressionist painters.[34] Meanwhile, Gütersloh spent the early post-war years as a theatre director in Munich, while Andersen also joined *Der Wassermann* in 1919. Relocation to the provinces was not an exception but a prevalent practice. This also became apparent in the motif choice of these artists and their media of choice. In Harta and Faistauer's case, it is most evident in their focus on religious subject matter and interest in fresco painting. Matching the Catholic core of Salzburg culture, this led to large-scale projects, such as the votive altar that Faistauer was commissioned with by the Salzburg municipal government and the large-scale fresco decorations of the foyer at the Small Salzburg Festival house, completed in 1926/1927.[35]

As a prolific writer who regularly published essays in Austrian art magazines and the book *New Painting in Austria. A Painter's Views*' (1923), Faistauer offered a theoretical framing to these projects, which not only emphasised Austria's provinces as a significant location for modern art but in their 'search for the authentic in the Babel of modern art' also chimed with the quest for communal spiritualism that was a core ideal of the Salzburg Festival.[36] He criticised the favouring of form over spiritual content in modern art and fervently attacked 'the rush of the city, which has forced us to a stenographic brevity of thought and made our art short of breath'.[37] Proclaiming the need to return to profound spirituality in art, Faistauer praised the work of his contemporaries Franz Wiegele (1887–1944) and Kolig, emphasising the 'agrarian character' and 'healthy conservatism' of the former.[38] Celebrating their expressionistic work as representatives of the most successful development in contemporary Austrian painting, Faistauer not only set regional artistic practices at the centre of his book but also constructed a broader landscape of contemporary Austrian art in the provinces while defining Vienna as a place out of touch with concerns for profound cultural renewal. In his essay 'The Fresco' (1930), Faistauer emphasised the value of collective artistic production, supported by Harta, who suggested that it helped do away with the 'splendid isolation' of painting as a new direction in Austrian art with a communal core.[39]

It is clear from these statements that the *Wassermann* artists based their quest for artistic innovation on a combination of sentiments, which closely reverberated Hofmanthsthal's aims to fuse a Baroque 'aesthetic to a (Bavarian and Austrian) regional history'.[40] These elements, defined by Steinberg as 'the drive to cultural totality and the resistance to fragmentation and ambiguity', emerge as an explicit core to Faistauer's ideals.[41] Yet while Steinberg has suggested that this positioning of the Salzburg Festival as a 'Baroque ideology' was an early Austrian interpretation of National Socialist aesthetics, concerning Faistauer, Harta and *Der Wassermann*, the roots for this drive towards 'wholeness' initially emerges as a response to the effects of the First World War. Faistauer noted in 1923: 'Who was not swallowed by grenade holes or other traps of man catchers is invited to save their soul [through spiritual art], here or there'.[42] Indeed, while several Salzburg artists later became supporters of the Austrofascist regime or National Socialism, at its outset, *Der Wassermann* attempted to reposition local tradition as an option for artistic innovation, in which spiritual content represented a means to overcome traumatic experiences of war.[43]

How this was visualised is especially evident in *Der Wassermann*'s first exhibition at the Salzburg *Künstlerhaus* in August 1919. Taking place a year before the inauguration of the Salzburg Festival, it represented the first culmination of ideas for the future of Austrian art beyond Vienna. Repositioning the legacy of the *Neukunstgruppe* and Viennese modernism in the context of Salzburg, the exhibition reveals how regional modernism

was conceived as a new route for Austrian art, which incorporated both a sense of tradition and a drive to look into the future. Nevertheless, the artists' reluctance towards formal innovation in favour of expressing (Catholic) spirituality also limited the success of their programme, making them at once 'too modern' for Salzburg and 'too moderate' to create a stir elsewhere.

Renewal caught between past and present

In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, art historian Josef Mühlmann announced:

> Before the war, Salzburg sought glory in producing fine beer and cosy inns. The war has spoiled the ales, closed the inns and sobered up the heads. The city's spiritual youth dreams of a European place of culture, of an intellectual hotspot. Should those dreams become true, should Salzburg no longer be the city of philistines of beer but of culture.[44]

He further explained, 'The intention of this artist's association is not to narrow-mindedly cling to a small country but to forge links with artists in foreign countries. Contemporary art is a cosmopolitan art, directed towards all of humanity rather than just one people'.[45] In other words, the key was to link the local art scene to broader developments and find ways of expression that responded to both poles. Theoretically, this aim corresponds with what Kenneth Frampton has termed 'critical regionalism' as an informed manner of forging a local identity-giving culture that is 'in tune with the emerging thought of the time'.[46] In its practical application, however, *Der Wassermann* was more closely in tune with the local Salzburg context as a Catholic, Baroque bulwark of Austrian culture. The group's first exhibition shows that, for all its importance as Austria's most visible and carefully staged regional modernism, *Der Wassermann*'s artistic output was more provincial than it responded to the 'cosmopolitan' element that Mühlmann emphasised.

To some extent, economic difficulties after the war hampered the establishment of international connections. Exhibition participants mainly came from Harta and Faistauer's networks in Salzburg, Vienna, Zurich and Munich, including Kubin and the Viennese painter Broncia Koller-Pinell (1863–1934), as well as a series of posthumously exhibited drawings by Schiele. Of 34 participating artists, eight were women, including Emma Schlangenhausen (1882–1947), who designed the poster and cover of the exhibition catalogue (Figure 1.4). Both images show different versions of the group's namesake in a coarse woodcut print, which became Schlangenhausen's signature style at this time. Moving away from colourful poster designs for which Schlangenhausen first became known as a student at Vienna's Academy of Applied Arts, she adopted a simplified black-and-white expressionism after relocating to Salzburg in 1919.[47] Other contributions to the exhibition, by and large, consisted of religious motifs, landscapes and portraits in different variations of expressionism; rather than introducing more recent international avant-garde tendencies, such as constructivism or futurism, the exhibition built on a continuation of artistic expression that had dominated the Viennese art scene for the past decade.

Most notable in this context was the emphasis on religious themes. Bahr's mention of the *Wassermann* exhibition as part of his 'Diary of Hermann Bahr' column in *Neues Wiener Journal* is held entirely in the vein of this newly found spiritualism, paying exclusive attention to religious work by Faistauer and Harta, as well as the 'spiritual value' of exhibits by established Austrian artists such as Gütersloh and Kubin.[48] As photographs

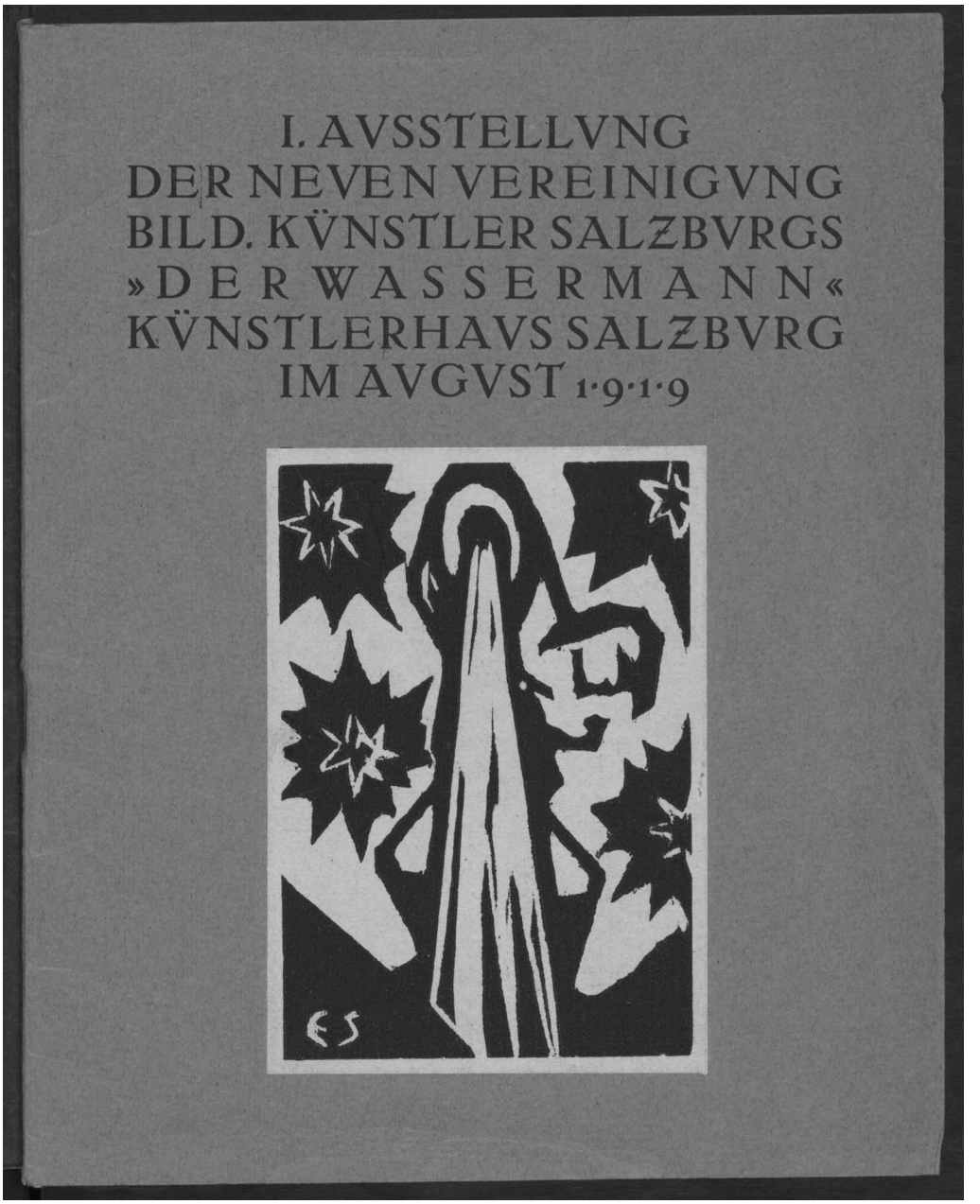

Figure 1.4 Cover of the exhibition catalogue of the new Association of Fine Artists '*Der Wassermann*', with woodcut by Emma Schlangenhausen, 1919. © ÖNB Vienna: 683.487-B, cover.

of the exhibition indicate, this Catholic spirituality was further enforced by a thematic hanging, which showed the triptych of Faistauer's votive altar together with two large paintings by Harta, *The Ten Commandments* and the *Three Magi*. In earthy and sombre colours, these central works of the exhibition demarcated expressionism as the main modern style of painting in Salzburg, represented by figures who the president of the Austrian Artist's Association, Josef Hoffmann (1870–1956), celebrated as Austria's 'best artists'.[49]

The praises by Bahr and Hoffmann indicated that the exhibition and their supporters, by and large, fell into the category of 'moderate modernism', an expression used by art historian Hans Ankwicz-Kleehoven to define visual art that showed awareness for modern styles formally, yet preferred figurative painting and traditional genre motifs.[50] As a description that might be paraphrased as 'modern but not quite modernist', 'moderate modernism' was the most common tendency in Austrian art exhibitions after the First World War, representing a popular art of the middlebrow. In this regard, the first *Wassermann* exhibition (Figure 1.5) was representative not only as a show that manifested the regional proliferation of Austrian art but also as a representation of the predominant artistic tendencies at the time.

The most innovative aspect of the exhibition was its integration of old master sculptures, adopted from the exhibition *Developments of Impressionism in Painting and Sculpture* at the Vienna Secession in 1903, which showed works by El Greco, Tintoretto and Rubens alongside impressionist works to create a historical lineage, and had left a deep impression on Faistauer.[51] *Der Wassermann* juxtaposed medieval sculptures with works by its

Figure 1.5 Photo of the first *Wassermann* exhibition at the Salzburg Künstlerhaus, 1919. InvNr Foto 37005 © Salzburg Museum.

members, forging a visual continuation based on Christian iconography.[52] Art historian Eva Michel has suggested that this exhibition aspect was part of a legitimisation process achieved by presenting historical precedents.[53] Yet the act of referencing went beyond the exhibition in the juxtapositions between Faistauer's votive altar and Harta's paintings with medieval and gothic sculpture. Given Salzburg's position as a city whose history was deeply tied to Catholicism, the exhibition tied its proclamations for a new 'cosmopolitan' art to a specific local identity. The group's understanding of cosmopolitanism in line with the exhibition set-up suggests an affinity with Hofmannsthal's cosmopolitanism, which he principally understood as a 'German virtue' and thus conceived of in German-nationalist terms.[54] In the exhibition, the focus on Christian subject matter and its incorporation of medieval and gothic icons defined the specific function of Salzburg as the 'alternative' for modern art in Austria after 1918. With its first public presentation, *Der Wassermann* promoted a regionally inspired modern art, which adopted and replicated Salzburg's identity as a German-Catholic city. While the connection to the local cultural context was evident because of these references to Catholicism and the Baroque, the question of what was 'modern' about the exhibition was much more contested.

The old dichotomy between the metropolis and the provinces was acutely felt by the newcomers, who were not only accused of 'using food rations necessary for the local population' but also found ideological resistance to their rejuvenation efforts.[55] Not least, this was due to the combative rhetoric that Faistauer and Harta used to introduce *Der Wassermann*, which was studded with condescending remarks towards Salzburg and its inhabitants.[56] While criticising Vienna as a place void of spirituality, *Der Wassermann* members simultaneously called Salzburg an 'intellectually backwards place', which had to be taught an 'understanding of modern art' by the newcomers from Vienna. Thus, it is no surprise that *Der Wassermann* quickly gained a reputation as 'a handful of loudmouths […] who force their programme onto the masses'.[57]

The attacks on Salzburg's provincial position brought with it strong reactions against the exhibition by local critics, who, on the one hand, sought to defend the honours of the 'old Mozart city' Salzburg and, on the other hand, put the rhetoric of *Der Wassermann* artists down to youth and inexperience, which the writer Hans Seebach also detected in the exhibition: 'If the exhibition is nothing more than an interesting stage in the chain of their development, then their work can be respected, then we hope that their cheeky and crazy ideas are only a phase and they will find their way back to clarity'.[58] Continuing with his 'concerns' about expressionist art as too complicated and negatively charged, Seebach positioned the exhibition as an instance of juvenility.[59] In his review of the exhibition, the local painter Franz Kulstrunk (1861–1944) went as far as to question whether what was exhibited 'can even be called art', dismissively referring to some of the works on paper as 'children's art'.[60] While local reactions to the exhibition can, in part, be led back to *Der Wassermann*'s attacks on Salzburg as a 'backwards' provincial city, the comments explicitly relating to the exhibition also confirm a reluctance to accept modern art even if it was as 'moderate' as expressionism was at this time. Therefore, in the local Salzburg context, *Der Wassermann*'s art was 'modernist', judged from the point of view of local genre painters and conservative critics.

Further afield, reactions were more cautious. The Viennese journalist Erwin Rainalter noted that the show's strong opposition in Salzburg was 'inexplicable', as it emphasised tradition over modernity overall.[61] Meanwhile, an extensive review dedicated to the exhibition in the Viennese daily *Neue Freie Presse* indicates the specific framing within which attempts of cultural emancipation in the provinces were seen: 'The turn away from Vienna, the growing independence of the provinces, which made so many unfortunate

declarations against the old imperial city, is finally starting to demonstrate some awareness for its independence in a positive light'.[62] Despite its 'strange' disposition towards religious art, the show is judged as a 'beautiful exhibition' in a small city while pointing towards the curious upheaval caused by art that was 'through and through moderately modern'.[63] Similarly, journalist Hans Faltinger noted in the *Linzer Tagblatt* in June 1919, when works by eleven *Wassermann* members were shown in the Upper Austrian capital Linz, that, in the provinces, 'one thinks of them as the most modern art and thus wants to reject them. In truth, they no longer belong to the newest directions in painting'.[64]

As these reviews suggest, *Der Wassermann*'s plan for artistic renewal might have been seen with scepticism in Salzburg. However, elsewhere, reactions suggested little drive towards artistic renewal in the group's exhibitions. Indeed, the group's second exhibition at the Salzburg *Künstlerhaus* in August 1920, which coincided with the opening of the Salzburg Festival, was predominantly conceived through its exhibition of impressionist masters, including Cezanne, Courbet, Gaugin and Klimt, while the only contemporary artist judged as a 'hopeful talent' was Faistauer – by that time, an established artist.[65] *Der Wassermann*'s aim of finding a new centre of Austrian art was thus, by and large, acknowledged, yet it was hardly perceived as a challenge to Viennese hegemony. Instead, the founding of artist groups in the provinces was seen as a positive reaction to the geopolitical issues and embraced as a diversification of art scenes independent from Vienna, which Austrian culture could benefit from overall.

The initial upheaval that *Der Wassermann* caused quickly subsided. After only three years, the association dissolved with Harta's return to Vienna in 1922. However, the group had nonetheless instigated significant changes to Salzburg's artistic landscape. This included the establishment of a modern art gallery to make contemporary art accessible in the provinces and to disperse the central collections of Vienna's museums.[66] Moreover, *Der Wassermann* was not the only group of artists who relocated from Vienna to Salzburg. Another was the 'Viennese émigrés', a loosely connected group of women artists, consisting of Schlangenhausen, a *Wassermann* member like the sculptor Hilde Exner (1880–1922), the ceramicist Marie Cyrenius (1872–1959), the designer Magda Mautner-Markhof (1881–1944), and the painter Helene Taussig (1879–1942).[67] Together, they helped to foster a network of studios and private tuition, which offered a considerable expansion to the Salzburg art scene.[68]

While not all of the 'Viennese émigrés' were *Wassermann* members, it is significant that *Der Wassermann* had a more open membership policy towards women's participation compared to Vienna's established art associations, most notably the Hagenbund.[69] Women could become regular members and hold official positions in the association. Of the five members of the group's first steering committee, two were women: the ceramicist Luise Spannring (1894–1982) and the painter Elfriede Mayer (1883–1946). Leaving Vienna thus opened new opportunities for women artists, for whom the capital's established associations were only open as associated members. Even though Salzburg hardly offered a progressive artistic environment, it harboured opportunities for a new generation of artists who became part of Salzburg's art establishment as successors of *Der Wassermann*.

After the group dissolved, Faistauer followed up in July 1925 with the founding of the *Sonderbund Österreichischer Künstler in Salzburg* ('Special Association of Austrian Artists in Salzburg'). This new association continued to promote contemporary art and modern culture in Salzburg with an even closer link to tradition and Catholicism. It also emphasised supporting young artists and designers 'in moral and material terms'.[70] With personal connections to figures such as Kajetan Mühlmann, the head of the festival's marketing bureau, from 1927 onwards, the *Sonderbund* became closely involved

in consolidating the Salzburg Festival's ideals in art, design, and architecture.[71] Despite this significant connection, the *Sonderbund* has rarely been mentioned in the scholarship, which privileges Faistauer and Harta's position as the two artists who 'introduced' modern art to Salzburg. However, the *Sonderbund* emerged as an essential platform for several young modern artists working in the Austrian provinces, including the writer Karl Heinrich Waggerl (1897–1973), the ceramicist Hilde Heger (1899–1998), and the designer Leopoldine (Poldi) Wojtek (1903–1978), who was still a student of Vienna's School of Applied Arts when joining the group in 1925.[72] Working closely with the Salzburg Festival, these artists came to represent a permanent feature of Austrian culture outside Vienna and built on the legacy of *Der Wassermann*.

'New' art, questionable politics, and the Salzburg Festival: The case of Poldi Wojtek

Of the new generation of artists who made their careers not in Vienna but in Salzburg, Wojtek stands out in particular. Not only does she exemplify how collaborations between the *Sonderbund* and the Salzburg Festival became a permanent feature of Salzburg cultural life, but her work also represents that of a woman artist whose contributions have found little mention in scholarship on modern Austrian art because of its complex social and political history: while, on the one hand, Wojtek's career represents a typical trajectory of women artists trained at Vienna's Academy of Applied Arts, her later support of National Socialism complicates the image of women designers in interwar Austria, which tends to be represented by progressive Jewish artists.[73] As the example of Wojtek shows, alternative cultural circles in the provinces provided a different platform for modern women artists and designers, which were informed by conservative and far-right politics, even though a modern visual language defined their artistic output. Born into a German nationalist family, Wojtek trained at the Professional School of Ceramics in Czech Znojmo/Znaim (1919–1922) and studied at the School of Applied Arts in Vienna, which she completed in 1926. There, Wojtek studied the theory of ornamental form with the progressive art pedagogue Franz Čižek (1865–1946) and attended architecture classes taught by Hoffmann. At this point, the School of Applied Arts had close ties to commercial luxury design with the Viennese Workshops ('Wiener Werkstätte', WW) and was home to experimental teaching practices and painting.[74] In both branches, several of the school's female students became successful artists and designers and counted among the most progressive representatives of Viennese modernism. While the careers and fates of these women might seem a world away from that of Wojtek, they not only had the same artistic education but also developed their careers in parallel.

For example, Erika Giovanna Klien (1900–1957) studied at the school at the same time as Wojtek and was a prominent representative of the short-lived art movement known as Viennese Kinetism.[75] Like Wojtek, she moved to Salzburg after graduating, where she taught at the Elizabeth Duncan School until emigrating to New York in 1929. Yet, Klien quickly became frustrated with life in Salzburg, complaining about its conservatism. A particularly telling example of the artist's negative experiences in the city can be found in the *Kleßheim Courier* (Figure 1.6), drawn diaries, which Klien would send to her friends in Vienna.[76] In a letter dated 12 February 1927, her readers are informed that 'the editor of the *Kleßheim Courier* has joined the Union of Fine Artists in Salzburg and attends weekly nude drawing classes'. Below, the letter shows one of these lessons, Klien sitting at the front, drawing a nude in a Kinetist style, while another student, himself having drawn a traditional nude, looks at her work incredulously. Fading out behind them, a group of figures hail insults

at the artist and her work: 'Defilement of Art!', 'Idiocy!', 'Bogus!' In Klien's experience, Salzburg undoubtedly represented a place hostile to modernist art. Indeed, after Harta departed from Salzburg, the *Sonderbund* took a somewhat more 'dogmatic' direction under Faistauer's lead, championed by Josef Mühlmann's younger brother Kajetan.[77]

Figure 1.6 Erika Giovanna Klien. *Klessheim Courier: Scandalous News*, 1927. Photo: Wien Museum. https://www.wienmuseum.at

In contrast to Klien's struggles with a growing conservatism in Salzburg, Wojtek's career flourished in the city from the mid-1920s onwards. Wojtek joined the *Sonderbund*, which launched her career as a modern Salzburg artist working within the orbit of the festival in line with its promise to support budding young artists. The wide-ranging training the artist received in Vienna formed the basis of a career which spanned different facets of artistic production. In this light, Wojtek's success as a graduate of the Academy adds significantly more nuance to the established image of the *Kunstgewerblerin* (modern craftswoman) as a progressive figure who challenged social and artistic conventions.[78] Even though Wojtek had the same training as her more progressive peers, the artist's politics could not have differed more from that of her fellow students, such as Klien. The example of Wojtek thus sheds new light on the complex politics of Austrian interwar art and design. It indicates that the education artists received in the capital was readily adjusted and redeveloped in response to different local conditions in the provinces and changing political ideals. Wojtek's poster design for the festival, in line with a range of other works she produced in the 1920s and 1930s, shows how the artist applied her training as a modern craftswoman to fit the specific conditions she found in Salzburg.

In 1926, the year of her graduation, Wojtek was part of a group of artists that helped to execute a monumental fresco designed by Faistauer for the entry hall of the Small Festival Hall (today, the House for Mozart). The building itself had been remodelled in 1926 by Clemens Holzmeister (1886–1983), a leading figure of Austrian interwar architecture who worked closely with Faistauer and his associates on several projects related to the festival.[79] Wojtek participated in the realisation of several of these projects, all related to the public fashioning of the festival – and Salzburg – as representatives of a new Austrian culture. Indeed, Wojtek was not the only woman active in these circles: the ceramicist Gudrun Baudisch (1907–1982), for example, worked closely with Holzmeister throughout the 1930s.[80] Despite their conservative politics and Catholicism, Baudisch and *Wassermann* member Spannring nonetheless participated in group exhibitions organised by the progressive women's art association *Wiener Frauenkunst*, indicating how the conservative modernism in Salzburg also had a presence and intersected with its more progressive Viennese counterpart.[81] Wojtek's activities, however, were much more Salzburg-focused. One such project was the fresco, as mentioned earlier, which covered over three hundred square meters of the foyer, including scenes from the festival's most prominent play, *Der Jedermann*, religious scenes, as well as portraits by prominent figures related to the festival, including Holzmeister, Faistauer himself, as well as the governor of Salzburg, Franz Rehrl. Wojtek was one of the 40 assistants who helped to realise this monumental project in a sgraffito technique, which the artist would later use for several other fresco designs of her own. In 1930, she decorated Kajetan Mühlmann's Salzburg apartment with dainty ornaments, for example (Figure 1.7), photographs of which were published in the arts magazine *Österreichische Kunst*.

While fresco painting was one of Wojtek's most successful trades, she also contributed to numerous other design projects in and around Salzburg, such as tapestries for the Great Festival Hall, assisting Kolig and Andersen.[82] Thanks to Kajetan Mühlmann, her later husband and a prolific publicist, her contributions were frequently mentioned in the Austrian press even when she only took on a supporting role. In the subsequent years,

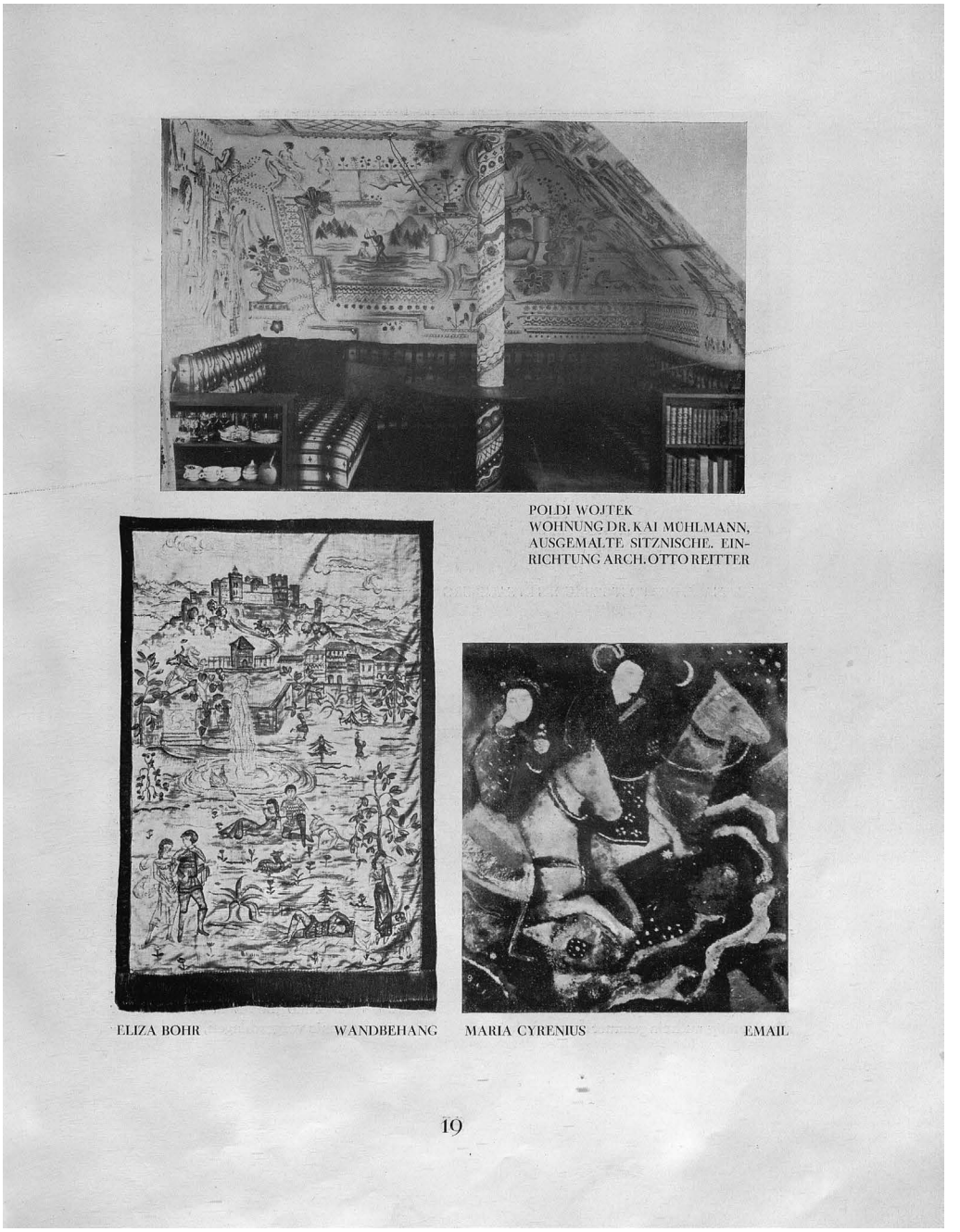

Figure 1.7 Photograph of wall decorations by Poldi Wojtek, reproduced in Kajetan Mühlmann, 'Neue Kunst in Salzburg. Architektur u. Kunstgewerbe', *Österreichische Kunst* 9 (1930), 19. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

Wojtek accepted numerous commissions in Salzburg, including fresco paintings for the city's new postal hall (1930), which have now been lost.[83] Aside from architectural decorations, Wojtek was also active in the local *Gewerbeförderungsinstitut* ('Institute for the Promotion of the Industrial Arts'), where she designed exhibition posters and decorative souvenirs in the 1930s.[84]

Through her links to the *Sonderbund* and the press office of the Salzburg Festival, Wojtek became a prolific member of Salzburg's cultural scene. As a designer, artist and art teacher, she would continue her manifold activities throughout the 1930s and the years of the Second World War.[85] From the late 1920s until Austria's *Anschluss* to National Socialist Germany in March 1938, reports and essays in different magazines give a clear indication that the art and design practices she developed concerning the Salzburg Festival closely related to the marketing of Salzburg as a touristic region. The conservative modernism she represented thereby related to a much broader phenomenon in interwar Austrian culture: the connection between modern design and tourism and their importance in manifesting Austrian identity. Chapter 3 is dedicated to closely assessing this concerning different regions in Central Europe. However, here, Wojtek's logo for the Salzburg Festival represents one notable example.[86] Her design for a festival guide in 1928 is another. Both works show the manifestation of Salzburg modernism in relation to the festival.

In 1928, the Commission of the Salzburg Festival opened a competition to find a new poster design to advertise it. Wojtek's entry was part of a group of late submissions by former students of Vienna's School of Applied Arts encouraged to participate by the commission. Her design was ranked second after a (now lost) work by Hanns Erich Köhler (1905–1983). Still, her entry emerged as the winning design through personal intervention by the head of the festival's marketing bureau, Mühlmann.[87] The poster in question was a simple graphic composition, which combined vital elements of the festival's identity: on the top left, a red and white flag represents the colours of the federal state of Salzburg. The Flag also functions as a stage curtain, behind which a classical theatre mask emerges. Finally, at the front of the picture, Salzburg's historical landmark, the Fortress Hohensalzburg, anchors the poster geographically in the town and its long history. Design historian Anita Kern pointed out that transforming the poster into a logo was unusual. However, its simple design lent itself to easy adjustment to forge a coherent visual identity for the festival.[88] By the late 1920s, the festival had gained growing international publicity. In 1926, conductor Peter Bechert noted that 'what began modestly under the name of the Salzburg Festival five years ago […] has since developed into a big and firmly established summer institution'.[89] As part of this international attention, giving the festival a recognisable brand became increasingly important, which could also stand in for a 'new' Austrian identity overall as modern, yet also rooted in tradition.

The other entries to the poster competition have been lost, so it is impossible to compare them. When asked about her competitors in an interview in 1978, Wojtek said that the other entries were 'overly Salzburgian motifs. Mine was not so alpine, it was […] the most austere and therefore also the most effective, and as a motif, it was quite neutral'.[90] Aside from the artist's connections to the selection committee, which seems to have had some influence on her success, Wojtek's comment indicates that the festival's marketing bureau also chose her entry because it paid equal attention to modern design as to Salzburg's historical roots. A key figure in this respect was Mühlmann. Today, he is

mainly known for the crimes he committed under National Socialism: as a high-ranking SS officer, he was involved in the looting of art in Poland and the Netherlands.[91] When exactly he became a party member is uncertain. Indeed, historian Olivers Rathkolb notes that when Mühlmann gained his position for the Salzburg Festival, he was known as a well-connected social democrat.[92] This turn from social democracy to national socialism was far from unusual in early 1930s Austria. Especially after the crushing of the *February Uprising* civil war in 1934, many supporters of the social democratic party became radicalised.[93] In Wojtek and Mühlmann's case, recent inquiries indicate that political opportunism played a significant role in their support for national socialism.[94] When Mühlmann took up his post as the head of the marketing bureau in 1927, he was a loud defender of a historically rooted modernism – precisely in keeping with the ideals of the Salzburg Festival, the *Sonderbund* and *Der Wassermann*. After 1927, the festival's marketing bureau made apparent efforts to integrate the visual arts into its concept, and the *Sonderbund* artists became important collaborators in constructing the festival's visual identity. Aside from supporting the poster competition from which Wojtek's logo originated, Mühlmann also introduced elaborate guides to the festival (Figure 1.8). The same year she won the competition, Wojtek was responsible for the guide's layout and graphic design. The guide opens with a quote by Hofmannsthal, which emphasises Austrian tradition rather than modernity:

> The state of Salzburg is the heart of the heart of Europe. It is situated halfway between Switzerland and the Slavic countries, halfway between northern Germany and Lombardian Italy; it is in the middle of South and North, between mountain and lowlands, between the heroic and the idyllic; its architecture lies between the urban and the rural, the ancient and the contemporary, baroque nobility and the lovely, eternal vernacular: Mozart is the precise expression of all of that. The middle of Europe has no more beautiful space; this is where Mozart had to be born.[95]

The following pages visualise this 'Salzburg charm' with numerous photographs and prints of artworks by *Sonderbund* members, including Faistauer and Waggerl. The content of the publication is strikingly conservative. It focuses on historical Salzburg and its sacral architecture, untouched rural landscapes, and tourist information to emphasise Salzburg's excellent connection to other holiday destinations in Austria, Bavaria, and Italy. Wojtek's layout, however, frames the guide in a modern light, emphasising the interplay between modernity and tradition so central to the ideology of the festival.

On the cover, Wojtek used a capitalised serif-font type in a simple design, in which thick red lines in an otherwise black-and-white layout appear as variations on the Salzburg flag, also featured on the logo. At the centre of the page, a photograph by Bruno Reiffenstein (1868–1951) depicts the *Felsenreitschule* ('rock riding school'), which had been transformed into an open-air location for festival performances in 1926. Rather than showing a performance, the square in the photograph is empty, framed by a rounded archway. Adding symbolic significance to the location by incorporating this photograph, Wojtek applied a similar approach to the guide's design for the poster/logo. As the two closely correspond in style, they underline the aim of giving a specific – modern – visual identity to the festival without retorting to Alpine 'kitsch'. At the same time, the images and advertising materials used for the guide stand in tension with this modernity, instead forging an image of rural

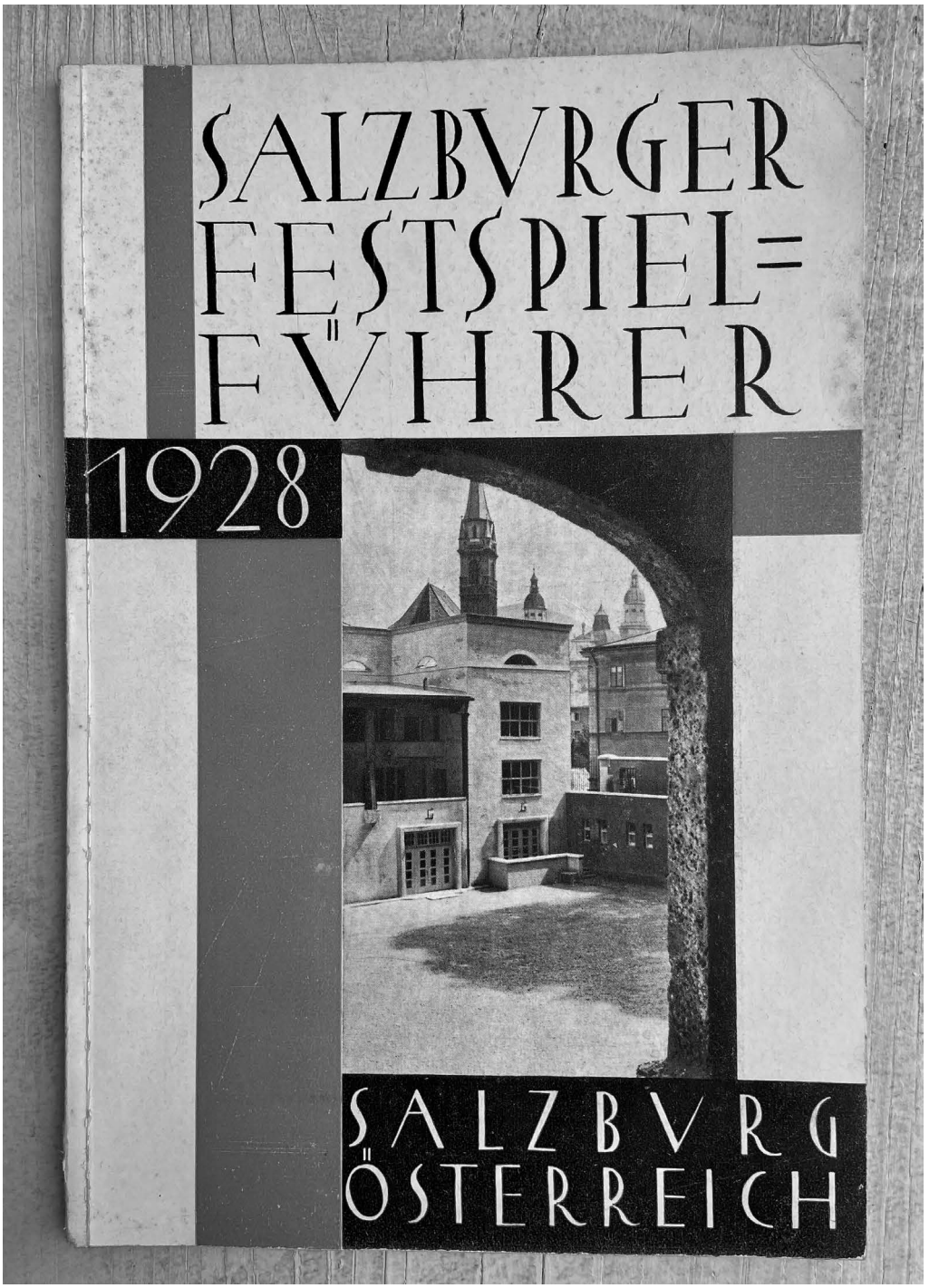

Figure 1.8 Kajetan Mühlmann and Poldi Wojtek. *Salzburger Festspielführer*, 1928. Photo by author.

Austria as an archaic place. Moving beyond Wojtek's poster/logo design as a single instance in which she supported the branding efforts for the festival, the guide overall shows the integrative efforts that arose from a collaboration between Mühlmann and the *Sonderbund* artists. Given the various projects she was involved in, Wojtek represents a model example for a different kind of modernity in Austrian interwar art within this nexus, which merged a growing political conservatism with aims for artistic renewal in the provinces. Not least, the guide to the festival indicates that the 'moderate modernism' artists such as Wojtek constructed offered a marketable image for the festival in light of the 'nationalist cosmopolitanism' within which it was conceived.

The diverse nature of Wojtek's contributions to art and design illustrates the Salzburg cultural scene, which straddled modernity and tradition: though Wojtek was aware of contemporary developments, referencing, for example, elements of the New Objectivity and Marie and Otto and Neurath's Isotype signage system, even her most experimental work, such as the Posthalle frescos and the logo for the festival, only does so in a toned-down manner. However, rather than seeing this as an augury of her later work under National Socialism, this kind of modernism – 'moderately modern through and through', as one reviewer called it at the time – was prevalent among most Salzburg artists.[96] Even Faistauer and Holzmeister, the most eminent figures associated with modern art and architecture in Salzburg, embraced a conservative form of modernism, aiming to reconnect with tradition and spirituality. As for Wojtek, her training and work from the 1920s resemble that of many other female designers who trained at the School of Applied Arts, even though her politics distinguish her from more progressive women artists, who are usually the focus of research. Simultaneously a modern artist who trained alongside some of Austria's most progressive cultural figures and a reactionary figure who, after 1938, capitalised on the persecution of former colleagues, Wojtek and her work highlights some of the contradictions of modern Austrian art and design between the wars, which first became manifested with artists' relocation from Vienna to Salzburg in the aftermath of the First World War.[97]

Interwar Salzburg: A prototype for Austrian modernism?

Considering the starting points of *Der Wassermann* as an association aiming to find an alternative space for modern artistic culture outside Vienna, artists such as Wojtek give a surprising answer to how these aims evolved during the 1920s. While Salzburg began as a refuge with the promise of artistic renewal, by the late 1920s, it had transformed into a hotspot for 'national cosmopolitanism' in which conservative and moderate modernism dominated. Even though the original *Der Wassermann* group was short-lived, its successor, the *Sonderbund*, through its ties to the Salzburg Festival, not only succeeded in establishing a strong modern artistic culture outside Vienna but also one which developed a distinct identity that was easily adaptable as Austria's political landscape took a decisive turn to the right in the early 1930s. While regional modernism after 1918 at first appeared to be reoriented towards establishing a level of cultural self-sufficiency with the founding of artists' associations, exhibition activities and art schools outside Vienna, beyond the umbrella of localised modernity, Salzburg modernism exemplifies how this project was continually related to a national framework. As the following chapter shows, focusing on regional, national and international exhibitions, the localised modernism promoted in Salzburg would become central to presentations of post-imperial Austrian culture.

Notes

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87 Oliver Rathkolb, Anita Kern and Margarethe Lasinger, *The Salzburg Festival's logo, and its designer Poldi Wojtek* (Salzburg: Salzburger Festspielfonds, 2020), 12–13.
88 Rathkolb et al., *The Salzburg Festival*, 114. Anita Kern, *Österreichisches Grafikdesign im 20. Jahrhundert* (Salzburg: Pustet, 2008).
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94 Rathkolb et al., *The Salzburg Festival*, 19.
95 Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 'Salzburg die Festspielstadt', *Salzburger Festspielführer* (1928), n.p.
96 -ei-, 'Ein neuer deutschösterreichischer Künstlerbund', *Neue Freie Presse* (15 September 1919), 2.
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2 Constructing the Countryside
Regionalism's Rise to Soft Diplomacy

'Tyrolean mountains and forests, slopes and meadows and a gleaming white blanket of snow in bright golden sunshine – a picture greeting with joys and cheers for life, an experience of rejuvenation in our suffering times'.[1] With this sickly sweet opening, the essay 'Kitzbühel in the Snow' introduces the province of Tyrol as a perfect holiday location, frequented by English tourists including even Prince of Wales. The article suggests that the Prince's interest in the small Tyrolean town was manifested in the previous year, when the exhibition *Austria in London* introduced Austrian culture to the English public. The show, taking place at Dorland Hall from 16 April until 12 May 1934, represents a significant shift in Austria's international presentation: increasingly moving away from an emphasis on Viennese grandeur and luxury design, the 'new' Austria was defined by rural culture, combined with technological progress.

When *Austria in London* opened at the initiative of the Austrian ambassador to the United Kingdom, Georg Franckenstein, significant political upheaval held a grip on the country: Against the background of the world economic crisis, political instabilities led to an increasingly violent triangle of competing factions between the conservative Christian Social Party, the Social Democrats and the National Socialists.[2] Unable to continue cooperation over an increasing ideological divide, the national government stalled in 1932, and after enforcing the *kriegswirtschaftliches Ermächtigungsgesetz* ('Enabling Act of the necessities of war') in March 1932, Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuß established an authoritarian regime, where internal political opposition became increasingly restricted, ending in an authoritarian style of government in 1933.[3]

With the assassination of Dollfuß by National Socialists in the early summer of 1934, Kurt Schuschnigg became the head of this Austrofascist government, while Dollfuß, a devout Catholic, military officer and WWI veteran, remained the regime's ideological, mythologised figurehead.[4] Prepared and taking place in the early stages of the Austrofascist regime, *Austria in London* sought to present what was 'typically Austrian' to a potential political ally. Indeed, officially, the curtailment of civil rights and the new authoritarian leadership was presented as a necessity to avoid an *Anschluss* to the Third Reich, positioning Austria as the first bastion against the National Socialist regime. With these aims to present Austria as German yet *different* and as a more pleasant country compared to the Third Reich, *Austria in London* attempted to demarcate 'Austria' as a place of ideal alpine culture.[5] The exhibition thus moved towards a neat presentation of the country as rural, Catholic and ideally set up for a touristic market.

The previous chapter has shown how the collapse of the Habsburg Empire led artists to withdraw from Vienna in an attempt to revitalise Austrian culture. With the example

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-3

of Salzburg, this was achieved not so much through formal innovation but rather with the expansion and consolidation of networks that offered new opportunities to artists. The 'provincialisation' of Austrian culture continually grew in visibility over the following decade, building a modern art and visual culture in which rural areas and 'peripheries' represented a significant aspect. Tracing the broader implications of this transformation in official culture, this chapter addresses the construction of modern countryside imagery in regional, national, and international exhibitions. It considers the transformation of the alpine landscape into a crucial aspect of Austrian visual identity. The goals of soft diplomacy through exhibition practices were openly communicated, for example, by the Austrian Minister of Commerce, Fritz Stockinger, in 1934: 'Exhibitions abroad play an important part in this work of bringing about international sympathy and rapprochement. They give visitors an object lesson in the cultural characteristics of the nation concerned, and in its special qualifications in certain branches of production'.[6] As tools of distilled cultural representation, exhibitions gradually formed a comprehensive image of Austria disseminated at home and abroad. Looking closely at the different agents that were involved in selected exhibitions, including *Tiroler Künstler* (1927), *Austria in London*, and the Austrian pavilion at the World's Fair in Paris (1937), the chapter traces the roots of Austria's presentation as a modern alpine state. It pays particular attention to the construction of this official presentation through a network of artists whose success in cultural mediation between Vienna and the provinces gave them influential positions in Austrian culture. As their involvement and representation in regional and international exhibitions shows, the official narrative of post-imperial Austrian modernism hinged on contributions by conservative forces, who perpetuated ideals of a national cosmopolitanism that had first come to fruition in connection with the Salzburg Festival. While this development was particularly reinforced after the accession of Austrofascism, its consolidation process began much earlier and can thus not be solely linked to this reactionary government. Instead, the repetition of specific elements of regional and rural culture, such as the alpine landscape and its identification with masculine strength, reflected longstanding debates about the countryside as a place of rejuvenation, which became closely entangled with processes of finding Austria's post-war cultural identity.[7] The official identification of Austria with its alpine provinces also went in hand with the growing exclusion of non-German-Catholic facets of Austrian culture, which led to the erasure of cultural heterogeneity that had represented such an essential building block of Habsburg culture.[8]

Definitions of 'Austria' gradually eliminated all sense of ethnic difference and not only privileged a narrative in which 'Austrians' were positioned as German-Catholic but also streamlined their presentation in line with the alpine geography. Vienna, meanwhile, became increasingly encapsulated in the past, representing a historical capital more than a modern metropolis. In comparison to neighbouring Czechoslovakia, for example, which constructed an internationally successful image of a modernised and industrial (Czech) West of the country, while its east (Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia) represented folk culture and traditions, Austria's image was notably more homogenous.[9] In a slightly altered form, the image of Salzburg as a Catholic, Baroque picturesque town played an essential role in this context, as did its surrounding countryside, defined by mountains, lakes, and forests, which were easily suited to the presentation of a 'pleasant' Austrian identity abroad.

Lessons in national representation: Paris 1925 as a contested lens to a 'new' country

Exhibitions, after Reesa Greenberg, 'are, by definition, selective and exclusive due to the biases of the organisers and the actual or perceived constraints of space, finance and

availability of works'.[10] As such, they employ a reductive lens, which elevates their function 'to simplify quite complex ideas for visual presentation and ease of communication with their audiences'.[11] With particular attention to World's Fairs, the role of exhibitions in formulating comprehensible displays of national identity has been a popular topic of research in the past decades, often focusing on how individual nations constructed their identities at individual fairs.[12] This chapter partially draws on this understanding of exhibitions as concentrated representations of national and state identities. Indeed, for the Habsburg successor states, 'world's fairs presented an excellent opportunity to negotiate their place on the international political and cultural forum'.[13] Yet compared to the extraordinarily prolific participation of neighbouring Czechoslovakia, for example, Austria's interwar representation at Word's Fairs was comparably small and only developed a recognisable image by the 1930s. In the run-up to this, regional art exhibitions played an important role in constructing a modern image of alpine Austria, passing on a set of clear identifiers from the regional to the national level. These exhibitions preceded the wider circulation of a rural modernity that consolidated Austria's redefinition as a small alpine country and peaked with a revamped presentation of 'Alpine modernism' at the World's Fairs in Brussels and Paris in 1935 and 1937, respectively.

The successful image of rural, Catholic-German yet modern Austria with a nostalgic Habsburg capital was preceded by the fact that other, more cosmopolitan approaches to Austrian identity had a problematic standing among local cultural figures and in public debates. Austria's participation in the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, taking place in Paris from April to November 1925, is a point in case here. Initially positioned as a revival of Austrian arts and crafts after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, the Austrian participation was strongly contested at home.[14] One of the most pressing points of critique was the strong representation of the Academy of Applied Arts and the Viennese Workshops among the exhibitors. Still more contested was the high number of women designers who participated, many linked to either of the two institutions. At the same time, other provinces of the new country found little representation. Critics widely pinned the blame on Viennese Workshop designs that represented, in the words of the journalist Bertha Zuckerkandl-Szeps, an 'ideal of elite art' which 'did not have to cater to the demands of the industrial producer' on the new generation of (female) designers that had misinterpreted the ideals of their teachers.[15]

The playful expressionist designs and decorative objects by figures such as Vally Wieselthier (1895–1945), Felice Rix-Ueno (1863–1967), and Susi Singer (1891–1955) were seen as unfitting and problematic in the new socio-political environment, intrinsically tied to the fact that female designers played a decisive role in its development. While the playful exterior of the pavilion, designed by Josef Hoffmann, was celebrated as a 'triumph', art critic Max Ermers blamed the 'fractured, exaggerated, […] artificial and above all superfluous' design and craft objects displayed in the interior on the new 'feminine character of Austrian design'.[16] The only remedy to this to rejuvenate Austrian culture, he found, was a shift towards a 'masculine, expert, serious […] and well-constructed' mass industry.[17] While the critiques of the pavilion officially focused on design, the debates surrounding the Paris exhibition overall encompassed thinly veiled attacks on modern femininity and the Viennese cosmopolitanism they began to redefine in the early 1920s.[18] Post-imperial Austria's participation in Paris revealed Vienna's standing as a 'feminine' and 'oriental' metropolis as an unfitting representation of modern Austrian culture.[19] At a moment when women's contributions to Austrian design gained greater international visibility, the gender bias irreverently attached to their designs thus rejected the mere possibility that this,

too, could be what Austrian identity represented. Instead, the utilitarianism and simplicity in architecture, design and visual culture promoted by Ermers found a strong alignment with a growing valorisation of rural culture as an image of strength and masculinity, which positioned the alpine provinces as a healthy antidote to the 'feminised' metropolis.

The relationship between Vienna and the provinces after 1918 was strained not only based on political differences (the Social Democrats governed Vienna, while the rest of the country was primarily Christian Social) but also in light of the question who could represent the new republic most appropriately.[20] Vienna represented social democracy, class, ethnic and national diversity, modern ways of living, mass culture, and old Habsburg glory. The countryside meant folk culture and traditional life, a Catholic, conservative German majority population, alpine and spa holidays and retreats from urban life.[21] While this dichotomy had existed long before the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, the new geopolitical set-up of the First Republic exacerbated the situation: Even though the new country was significantly less varied in population and geographic diversity than the Habsburg Empire, its smaller size led to the magnification of regional differences. Each of Austria's provinces (*Bundesländer*), nine in number since the Burgenland ('German West Hungary') became a part of Austria in 1922, aimed to demarcate its existence politically and culturally. They received considerable decision-making powers in economically important areas such as tourism and agriculture, as well as culturally, with the celebration of regional culture and customs.[22] Thus, even at a time when 'Austrian' identity was undefined, local and regional culture flourished.[23] One especially notable aspect in which the different provinces developed was the antagonism between the Austrian 'east' (Vienna) and 'west' (Tyrol) and the cultural orientation of the western states towards Munich rather than Vienna, as well as a reluctance to become a part of the new Austrian state.[24] Indeed, following Tyrol's incorporation into Austria in 1918, a clause in the regional constitution from 1921 maintained that this was only provisional:

> Tyrol is an independent, autonomous sovereign land which presently constitutes a part of the democratic Republic of Austria. As an independent land, it exercises all sovereign rights that have not been or will not be specifically assigned to the state.[25]

This strong regionalist consciousness played an essential role in the presentation of art from Tyrol in the First Austrian Republic. It built on the consolidation of Tyrol, first established in literary debates in the early twentieth century around the Innsbruck literary magazine *Der Brenner* (1910–1954).[26] Connected to and supported by important literary figures such as Karl Kraus, the cultural emancipation of Tyrol was also acknowledged in Vienna. Already at the turn of the century, Hermann Bahr had celebrated the 'male, forceful and thoroughly German' qualities of Tyrol in 'The Discovery of the Provinces' (1899), suggesting that it bore the potential to awaken, to push and shake up the stale culture of the city.[27] Similarly, the ever-polemic Adolf Loos – one of the staunchest critics of the 1925 Austrian pavilion – praised the 'authentic' simplicity of the Tyrolean alps.[28] Adding to this, the province had been an important location for alpine warfare during the First World War. Subject to widely circulating reports in the press, illustrated by war painters and photographers, the mountain battle scenes gained attention as treacherous and heroic sites of conflict. Regiments specialising in mountain warfare quickly became war heroes and adventurers who were predestined, not disciplined, to fight.[29] As a consequence, Tyrol represented the masculine force that Austrian cultural rejuvenation seemed

to require and provided a strong counter-narrative to the ornamental and decorative culture of Vienna. While it would take some years after 1918 until this position became integrated into Austria's international presentation, the first steps towards establishing Austrian alpine modernism were already taken in the 1920s. The reception and consolidation of the travelling exhibition *Tiroler Künstler* ('Tyrolean Artists'), which toured in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Hungary between 1925 and 1928, shows not only how Tyrol manifested a strong regional identity in art and visual culture, but also indicates that its most prominent representatives quickly gained representation on a national level and, thus, supported the construction of national narratives more broadly.

Tiroler Künstler: Austria's alpine core at home and abroad

Marking Tyrol's ideological ties (and geographic proximity) to Germany, *Tiroler Künstler* initially toured German cities such as Düsseldorf, Hamburg, and Munich in the winter months of 1925/1926. The first station was the small town of Gelsenkirchen, following an invitation of the local mayor after Tyrol had hosted children from the city to recover from the consequences of the First World War.[30] After a successful German tour, in which over 100 of the 200 works exhibited were sold, *Tiroler Künstler* was shown at the Vienna Secession before travelling to Budapest in the autumn of 1927 and, in the spring of 1928, to Zurich.

A central figure of the exhibition was the recently deceased painter Albin Egger-Lienz (1868–1926), whose weighty rural figures and earthy colours on large flat planes positioned him as the 'founding figure' of Tyrol Modernism.[31] Much like Faistauer, Egger-Lienz had a well-established career by the early 1920s, which included participation at the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris, membership of the Vienna Secession and a series of highly lauded and famous paintings of peasant scenes with religious themes, finished during the First World War. More significantly for the positioning of Tiroler Künstler as a counterforce to Vienna were the widely publicised debates about his failure to receive a professorship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, refused by Archduke Franz Ferdinand on the ground that his work was not patriotic enough. Well-established yet unable to make a career in Vienna, Egger-Lienz relocated to Tyrol, repeatedly refusing offers to take up a professorship in Vienna after 1918.[32] For his monumental expressionism and longstanding break with the Austrian capital, Egger-Lienz was an ideal figurehead to represent Tyrolean Modernism as fundamentally different to the art of the Austrian capital. That Tyrolean artists had developed their style in a stronger and more identifiable manner than their Viennese counterparts was further emphasised by linking Egger-Lienz's legacy to a younger generation of painters such as Alfons Walde (1891–1958) and Oskar Mulley (1891–1949), whose work displayed a similarly pared down rendering of alpine scenes.

Tiroler Künstler delineated a clear rural identity in its regionalist presentation, challenging the fact that most exhibitions of Austrian art abroad were still organised by Viennese artist associations, who sometimes cooperated with associations from other provinces. The exhibition of Austrian art in Warsaw in 1930, for example, included works by artists from the Styrian Association of Artists, Constantin Damianos (1869–1953), Franz Trenk (1899–1960), and Paul Kassecker (1903–1992).[33] These served to add a regional 'flavour', as Kassecker and Trenk, for example, were known for their alpine scenes, including painting and graphic work in the sombre style of New Objectivity or realist painting. Depicting skiers, snowy mountain tops, and remote alpine villages, their work visualised

von Amerling, Eybl, Fendi, Karl Schindler und Josef Danhauser, dessen großes Pariser Gesellschaftsbild „Liszt am Klavier“ mit seinen Porträts von Alexander Dumas, Georges Sand, Viktor Hugo für Paris schon inhaltlich besonders interessant ist und die Tradition engen kulturellen Zusammenhanges zwischen Wien und Paris lebhaft aufzeigt. Die nächsten Säle bieten Aquarelle und Zeichnungen von R. Alt und anderen Alt-Wiener Meistern und eine anmutige Büste der Kaiserin Elisabeth von Viktor Tilgner, ferner Wiener Kunsthandwerk, vor allem das klassische Porzellan der Sorgenthalperiode, das den Vergleich mit dem kostbarsten Sèvresporzellan ohneweiters aushält.

Im ersten Stock tritt der Besucher zunächst in einen Klimt-Saal, in dem besonders die letzte, wieder freie und malerische Periode des Künstlers durch eine Reihe von großartigen Werken vertreten ist. Zeichnungen von Klimt, Schiele und anderen Meistern dieses Kreises schließen an. Der nächste Saal zeigt die großartige, für Europa vorbildliche Entwicklung auf, die das österreichische Kunsthandwerk am Anfange unseres Jahrhunderts genommen hat. Im anstoßenden Saale kommt die Generation der Großen nach Klimt zu Worte: der große Zeichner Schiele, Faistauer, der Maler Österreichs, Egger-Lienz, der Gigant des Alpenlandes Österreich, Oskar Kokoschka, der große Problematiker von der Peripherie der Stadt. In den anderen Sälen werden Boeckl und Kolig, Mopp und Andersen, Wiegele und Dobrowsky, Kitt und Floch, Pauser, Tischler, Jungnickel, W. V. Krausz und andere der wichtigsten Maler österreichischer Moderne gezeigt. Bei der Plastik mußte auf eigentliche Monumentalplastik mit Rücksicht auf die Tragfähigkeit der Räume verzichtet werden. Doch wertvolle kleinere Arbeiten von Hanak, Fraß, Ehrlich, Wotruba u. a. sind zu sehen.

Die Ausstellung ist ein eindrucksvolles Zeugnis von Österreichs kultureller Leistung und wird als solches voll gewürdigt. Ihre Durchführung ist der Initiative des Bundesministers für Unterricht Dr. Hans Pernter zu danken; die gewaltige Arbeit der Zusammenbringung, Auslese, Aufstellung besorgte äußerst verdienstvoll der Erste Direktor des Kunsthistorischen Museums Hofrat Professor Dr. Alfred Stix und ein großes Arbeitskomitee mit Generalsekretär Kustos Dr. Buschbeck. Bei der Aufstellung wirkte der Direktor des Musée du Jeu de Paume M. André Dezarrois mit den österreichischen Kunsthistorikern.

Wir zweifeln nicht an dem Erfolge der Ausstellung, der sich weithin auswirken wird. Gerne sähen wir diese aufschlußreiche Schau österreichischer Kunst nachher in Wien. Sie könnte ein bedeutender Anziehungspunkt des sommerlichen Fremdenverkehrs werden und eine Fundgrube künstlerischer Erlebnisse für Kunstfreunde, Sammler, Gelehrte. Die Ausstellung Österreichische Kunst im Museum du Jeu de Paume ist eine Tat Österreichs.

Albin Egger-Lienz — Mütter / Privatsammlung, Wien

Les mères / Collection privée, Vienne

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Figure 2.1 Albin Egger-Lienz. *Mothers*. In ‘Österreischische Kunst im Musée du Jeu de Paume’, *Österreichische Kunst* 5 (1937), 12. Austrian National Library, https://anno.onb.ac.at

an untouched rural Austria while relying on a modernist formal language. This approach also dominated in *Tiroler Künstler*, altogether suggesting a symbiotic and 'natural' alignment between modern form and the Tyrolean landscape.

As a group exhibition, *Tiroler Künstler* was conceptualised in reference to the alpine landscape as the facilitator of a particular artistic culture, presented as idiosyncratic yet well connected to broader developments in modern art.[34] Its central representational bodies were the conservative artist associations *Künstlerbund Tyrol* and *Heimat* ('homeland'), and the Innsbruck-based group *Die Wage*, founded in 1925 by a generation of younger artists who aimed to drive forward artistic modernisation in the region.[35] Members of the group included the painters Wilhelm Nicolaus Prachensky (1898–1956), Ernst Nepo (1895–1971), and Leo Sebastian Humer (1896–1965), who all exhibited in *Tiroler Künstler*.

The designation 'Tyrolean artist' ('Tiroler Künstler') carried several ideological implications with it. Most notably, Tyrol Modernism was unequivocally masculine, regarding both the fact that its representatives were men without exception, and that the visual language of their work built on interpretations of the alpine landscape as a robust and forceful environment. Yet the connotation also had geopolitical implications: Erwin Merlet (1886–1939) and Egger-Lienz, for example, were based in South Tyrol, which had become Italian in 1920, splitting the province between two countries. The fact that *Tiroler Künstler* included artists from both parts emphasised the union between them culturally and simultaneously indicated the importance of regionalism over nationalism. In this regard, the exhibition as a show of 'Tyrolean' art was crucial since the regional denominator served to emphasise the unity of Tyrol, which was a hotly debated political issue throughout the 1920s and 1930s, fuelled by the argument that most of South Tyrol's population were ethnic Germans and should, thus, be Austrian citizens.[36] The cooperation between artists from Italian South Tyrol and the Austrian 'rest' of the province shows that, in western Austria, regional identity was of much more importance than a national identity that converged with the new republic. Following Tyrol's division between Austria and Italy, definitions of a joint cultural Tyrolean identity sought to overcome political divisions and manifested a visual language specific to the region. The dominant point of identification was the alpine landscape. The notion of progress through a 'joint spirit' in this light forged a sense of artistic community, attributed with the potential to revive (German-)Austrian culture in direct relation to the geography of its origins.[37]

Indeed, a regional identity had been cultivated since the early nineteenth century, when the innkeeper Andreas Hofer led local peasants in a rebellion against French and Bavarian occupants during the Napoleonic Wars.[38] Remembered as the *Heldenzeit* ('the era of heroes'), the myth of Hofer fuelled the region's positioning as a catholic, conservative bulwark, which countered outside influences with 'values such as loyalty, religion, courage, and love of freedom'.[39] In 1926, a scandal surrounding the theft of a monument to Hofer from Vienna ensued, which, stolen by the Andreas Hofer Society, was then re-erected in Kufstein, Tyrol, in a symbolic act of bringing the regional hero 'home'.[40] As this example shows, the cult around Hofer became a central point of reference in Tyrolean identity, cultivated through festivals and commemorations. In the visual arts, the Hofer myth was repeatedly celebrated in the work of Franz Defregger (1835–1921), a Tyrolean-born professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Widely hailed as the predecessor and teacher of Egger-Lienz, Defregger's genre and history paintings of Tyrol laid the thematic cornerstones of Tyrol Modernism, focusing on alpine landscapes and quaint rural scenes.[41]

Figure 2.2 Franz von Defregger. Homecoming of Tyrolean Militia in the War of 1809. 1876. Oil on canvas. Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin. https://id.smb.museum/object/964171

In his cultural history of Tyrol (1904), art historian Franz Arens emphasised that 'people from the mountains are different than people from the plains', as, secluded from the outside world through geographical conditions, 'they are rougher and closer bound to age-old traditions, more robust due to physical demand, and, building on strong social bonds because of centuries of isolation, less influenced by ambition, social achievement and the reckless abuse of social inferiors than people in modern society'.[42] Based on the historical struggle for Tyrolean identity, it is hardly surprising that at a time when other areas in Austria scrambled to redefine themselves, Tyrol continued to build on a strong regional identity, which also gave it a more visible position compared to other provinces, manifested in exhibitions, lectures and press features. *Tiroler Künstler* is a prime example of this. In his review of the exhibition, critic Viktor Trautzl noted:

> In the first instance, it seems inappropriate, wrong even, to categorise creative work based on geographic or regional aspects. In art history, we do not know Styrian, Bavarian or Prussian art, but only the monumental oeuvre of German art, which has regional idiosyncrasies just like language has its dialects. And yet we can speak of a Tyrolean Art because this mountainous borderland between two peoples and two cultures, in which Etruscan-Roman Elements penetrate from the South and heavy Germanness from the North, maintains such idiosyncrasy, such unmistakable individuality that it does not come off simply within a general German art.[43]

Trautzl lists Defregger, Egger-Lienz, Nepo, Holzmeister, and Walde as this Tyrolean style's leading representatives. Defining their work as 'profoundly different [from one another] but united in spirit', the author maintains that Tyrolean artists were unique in rendering local landscapes and people without an interest in broader cultural developments and modernisation. The rural roots of Tyrolean modernism thus challenged urban modernism in ideological and formal terms: 'Agrarian spirit (*Bauerngeist*) in the best sense of the word is the source from which artistic production in Tyrol always draws its new powers, the agrarian spirit, which surpasses the most radical metropolitan expressionism with its boldness in form and colour'.[44] The images accompanying the article showcase not the work of the best-known artists of Tyrolean origin, Egger-Lienz and Holzmeister, but instead introduce other local artists whose work conveys a similar spirit. These include Merlet's *Village in the Dolomites*, Wacker's *Houses*, and Nepo's portrait *Wolffa*. None of them dated and choosing different subject matter, the works together support the argument of a joint artistic direction in Tyrolean art, building on precise, sharp outlines and bright colours, as well as an emphasis on the alpine landscape, which features in the background of Nepo's portrait and as the central, overpowering element in Merlet's landscape, towering over the picturesque village on the lower half of his painting.

The emphasis on regional unity in artistic form and its basis in the rural landscape also found positive repercussions when the exhibition moved to the Kunstsalon Wolfsberg in Zurich in May 1928. Commenting on the 'similar sensibilities of people from the mountains (*Bergmenschen*)', *The Zurcher Zeitung* stressed the unifying power of the alpine landscape and its potential to bring progress in contemporary European art.[45] The streamlining of the artistic presentation of Tyrol as *modern* and *alpine* was not lost on some of the reviewers. In the conservative *Reichspost*, Trautzl noticed the absence of Hugo Grimm (1866–1944), an Innsbruck-based painter who specialised in romanticist landscapes.[46] Clearly, a more 'modern' image was sought, and this image was quickly interpreted as a new direction for Austrian art more generally. Indeed, by 1927, the Viennese newspaper *Die Stunde* emphasised that *Tiroler Künstler* contained 'so much of the Austrian spirit, which despite all difficulties to finding a coherent programme can suddenly offer so much achievement'.[47] In October 1927, the exhibition travelled on to the Nemzeti Salon in Budapest, where it was set to affirm the diplomatic ties between Austria and Hungary with a visit by Admiral Miklos Horthy, who led the country as a right-wing Christian state since his counterinsurgency in 1919. In the opening speech, the Hungarian Secretary of State Kertész emphasised the similarity of Austrian and Hungarian modern art based on their strong 'national orientation'.[48] By the time that *Tiroler Künstler* was shown in an official capacity in Switzerland and Hungary, the regional context of the exhibition thus had transformed into a national representation, reinforced by the unified image of a masculine, national, alpine landscape that Tyrolean art appeared to represent.

Looking at the most representative artists in *Tiroler Künstler*, a remarkable parallel emerges between those whose work was locally acknowledged as representative of Tyrolean Modernism and those incorporated into a more comprehensive Austrian Alpine modernism in the 1930s. *Tiroler Künstler* represented part of this process, not least because the exhibition found positive repercussions in all its locations for its pronouncedly rural subject matter and modern visual language, which seemed to promise a genuine new direction in Austrian art.[49] Critics defined a strong and masculine image for Tyrol; as Trautzl noted, 'the real Tyrolean artist cannot create sugar-sweet little

figurines and saucy images; everything he makes has heavy impact, a musty groundedness and inner greatness'.[50] The references to sugar-sweet figurines recall the gendered criticisms of the 1925 Paris expo, aligning Tyrol with a better alternative. Indeed, for conservatives such as Trautzl, *Tiroler Künstler* was evidence that art from the provinces had, once and for all, come into its own and not only represented Austria's alpine west as a 'beautiful homeland' but also as 'the strongest hope for a better, more beautiful future'.[51]

Statements such as this were more than mere regionalist rhetoric. The most significant figure in this regard is the architect Holzmeister. As one of Tyrol's modern 'masters', Holzmeister exemplifies a trajectory leading from Tyrol to Austrian alpine modernism as connected by several key figures. Born in Fulpmes, Tyrol, Holzmeister studied at the Technical University in Vienna and became a professor of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1924. Aside from several large-scale building municipal building projects and a profound interest in ecclesiastic architecture, Holzmeister became a prolific organiser of exhibitions and a cultural coordinator during Austrofascism.[52] After participating in the German shows of *Tiroler Künstler*, where he exhibited architectural models and sketches, Holzmeister became increasingly involved in constructing a (Catholic) alpine modernism. The first instance in which this was manifested internationally was through his role as the artistic director of the 1934 exhibition *Austria in London*, followed by his directorship of the art sections of the Austrian pavilions in Brussels and Paris in 1935 and 1937. Writing about Tyrolean art in a special issue on the province in the Viennese magazine *Profil* in 1933, Holzmeister followed Arens and Trautzl's trajectory when noting that 'special characteristics, which derived from the climactic conditions and characteristics of the available material, lend Tyrolean art forms, which are archetypal and unique'.[53] While warning of the 'kitsch' threatening Tyrolean culture through tourism, the architect also upheld Defregger, Egger-Lienz and their successors as documenters of 'real Tyrolean folk life'.[54] In a special article about art and sculpture in the same issue, Heinrich Hammer expanded these definitions by contrasting Tyrolean artists' 'powerful language' and 'greater connection to nature' with 'fragile Viennese sensibilities'.[55] Hammer, like Holzmeister, was little concerned with describing how these artists were 'modern', preferring to emphasise the connection to their Tyrolean homeland as proof of artistic authenticity that promised renewal. Shaped exclusively by male artists and with a rhetoric that built definitions of creative strength and cultural identity on strong masculine and conservative terms, the rural art emerging from Austria's western provinces anticipated a turn to the political right in form as much as in content. Yet this trajectory was not as straightforward as it may seem. On the one hand, Vienna was still too important culturally and historically to be overwritten. On the other hand, cultural and economic demands required a *modern* Austrian representation as much as rooting it in the countryside. Holzmeister's approach to alpine culture in international exhibitions exemplifies how such a dualism was strategically adopted to present Austria as modern yet rural, historically grounded yet forward-looking within official political frameworks.

Rural but modern: *Austria in London* (1934)

In a marked shift from the playful and distinctly Viennese image of Austria in Paris in 1925, rural modernism was seamlessly integrated into international presentations of the country by the 1930s. The countryside gained a new role in interwar Austrian culture

in this process: rather than simply representing continuity, tradition, and 'authenticity' as were the long-established attributes of rural culture, it became tied to processes of modernisation through tourism and technological expansion. By contrast, Vienna was positioned nostalgically as the old imperial capital, even though cosmopolitanism was integral to Viennese life, including repeated efforts by art historians to introduce modernist art to the city.[56] Yet this was a facet of the city that hardly 'sold' internationally. Instead, consolidated Alpine modernity allowed the country to be internationally connected and to build a post-imperial identity more than references to Vienna could. The reasons for this were closely entangled with economic and political concerns: From 1933 to 1938, when the Austrofascist regime struggled to maintain its independence from the Third Reich, an emphasis on the self-sufficiency of (German-)Austrian culture played a crucial role in the manifestation of a regime ideology that needed to distinguish its own 'Germanness' from that of the National Socialists.[57] The presentation of a Catholic, alpine land emerging from a Habsburg past was the narrative to go by. Instead of including groups of different faiths and ethnicities that continued to live in Vienna and in smaller communities in rural areas, the country's other provinces were, thus, to represent an Austrian-German form of diversity that built on the regional identities developed in the preceding decades.

Going in hand with a reactionary turn in Austrian politics in 1933/1934, the political role of art and design became strengthened through a series of new organisations and support opportunities.[58] During the Austrofascist regime, the visual arts held a higher position in Austrian official culture than they had since 1918. For example, in May 1933, the art magazine *Österreichische Kunst* announced the founding of the 'Society for the Promotion of Austrian Art Abroad', which sought to raise the international profile of Austrian artists: 'This society will be dedicated to consolidate the reputation and value of our fine artists abroad, to popularise the names of our fine artists and, in doing so, to support the state […] in these difficult times'.[59] The fact that Austrian artists were not yet better known abroad, besides a lack of financial support, was explained by their 'modest Austrian character', which prohibited them from drawing more attention to their work. Rather than tying the lack of international recognition to a concern for regional authenticity and little drive for experimentation in Austrian art, the limited attention post-imperial Austrian art had received was thus aligned with national virtues: modesty, cosiness, and a love for one's homeland (*Heimat*) above everything else. In turn, rurally inspired art quickly gained significance in international representation.[60] In the following years, the society, headed by Nikolaus Post, former Austrian ambassador to Warsaw, organised several exhibitions, including participation at the International Exhibition for Catholic Art in Rome (1934), the Austrian pavilion at the Venice Biennale (1934), *Austria in London* (1934), an exhibition of contemporary Austrian art at the House of Arts in Budapest (1935), and a show of Austrian graphic arts in Newport, the United States (1935).

Austria in London most concisely illustrates how rural culture grew in national significance. After National Socialist Germany introduced the *Tausend-Mark-Sperre* in 1933 to damage the Austrian economy, fining every border crossing to Austria with one thousand Reichsmark to curb Austrian tourism, the London exhibition was an important strategy to attract new foreign markets. During the time the *Tausend-Mark-Sperre* was in place (1933–1936), Austria laid the foundations for anglophone and francophone tourism by creating an idyllic, rural yet cosmopolitan alpine image.[61] As the exhibition in London and the subsequent presentation of the Austrian pavilions in Brussels and Paris show,

national presentation and the tourist industry went hand in hand, fostering an art and visual culture which constructed Austrian alpine modernity.

The economic goals of the exhibition were clearly communicated in the Austrian press: 'to make new connections and to invite English people to visit'.[62] The winning formula for this project was a combination of Habsburg nostalgia and a focus on tradition-based yet modern (meaning tourist-friendly) rural life. Announcing the London exhibition with a focus on 'industry, art, travel, sport', the cover of the catalogue by prominent graphic designer Josef Binder (1898–1972), set out a wide-ranging focus next to an image of a vertical Austrian flag, crowned by a shining star. Next to it, the abstracted head of a herald stands out in white, while the background, held in contrasting bright blue, outlines the shape of England, with London marked as a bright red spot. In the cover design, therefore, attention is paid as much to the host country as to Austria itself, further emphasised by the prominent feature of the exhibition location – Piccadilly Circus – on top of the page. With a sombre design and a celebratory tone, the cover promises sincerity while giving away little as to what audiences might expect from the exhibition. At the premises of Dorset Hall, visitors found a four-storey display in which rural culture and travel played a defining role. The exhibition formulated a comprehensive image of the country, in which the artistic directors, Holzmeister and Hoffmann, navigated between city and countryside. Arts and crafts, as essential export goods, were strongly represented on two floors, as was a modern art section and the experimental puppet theatre designs by Richard Teschner (1879–1948).

The exhibition's public reception was rather cursory, with few visitors. Yet overall the response was positive, emphasising precisely what the exhibition organisers had set out to present: that Austria was a beautiful country, with a nostalgic Viennese capital, that it was peaceful and colourful and an ideal place for leisurely and culinary exploration. One reviewer remarked that 'it seems there are at least a few who know that country and its delightful appeal to the tourist'.[63] Another called the exhibition a 'practical illustration of the territorial "trimming" carried out by the Peace Treaty', pointing out Vienna's position as 'shorn of her former glory'.[64] The *Daily Gazette for Middlesborough*, meanwhile, praised the art section overall as one of the contributions to the presentation of a country of 'many treasures': 'Everywhere is a feast of colour'.[65]

The works selected for the modern art section underlined this image, merging nostalgia for fin-de-siecle Vienna with an overview of contemporary painting that showed a decided tendency towards rural areas. Aside from prominent pre-war artists, such as Klimt and Schiele, the modern art section not only included representative work, such as the conservative painter Karl Sterrer's (1885–1972) portraits of Dollfuß and Holzmeister, but also a range of artists whose had left Vienna for the provinces in the preceding decade. Faistauer, who had died prematurely in 1930, was represented with a selection of pastels for the ceiling frescoes in the church in Morzg, Salzburg (1922–1923), as well as religiously themed tapestry designs, emphasising the strong Catholic features of his work that had also dominated the first *Wassermann* exhibition. Boeckl and Wiegele, from the Nötsch circle of artists in Carinthia, showed several landscapes, as did Wilhelm Thöny (1888–1949) from Graz. Ferdinand Kitt (1887–1961), Josef Dobrowsky (1889–1964), and Franz Zülow (1883–1963), who were based in Vienna yet spent the summers near Salzburg at the so-called Zinkenbach Painters' Colony (*Zinkenbacher Malerkolonie*) showed several works of the Salzkammergut lake district. Meanwhile, one of Egger-Lienz's best-known works, *Danse Macabre*, was displayed alongside his large panel *Life* depicting Tyrolean peasants. Despite the little

notice given to these specific sections in the British reports of the exhibition, in Austria, the 'masters Klimt, Faistauer, and Egger-Lienz' were revered as the most important representatives of Austrian modernism in the exhibition.[66] The choice of Klimt in this narrative is significant beyond the city-countryside dualism that the two artists represented. Given Klimt's 'convenient' death in 1918, the exhibition could frame the survival of alpine painting over Viennese decadence as natural progress, positioning a Viennese Habsburg past against an alpine present. Including scenes of rural life, picturesque mountain landscapes and alpine villages, the themes manifested in exhibitions of rural and regional modernism, such as *Tiroler Künstler*, thus were tightly integrated into the national display as a central part of Austrian culture and the visual arts. The same theme also led through the travel section, in which the visual arts were strongly represented in mural painting. Works by Jung and Kitt focused on themes such as outdoor sports and folk traditions. At the same time, a range of photographs traced Austria's most important spa towns, folk costumes from the different provinces, as well as 'scenic views', showing the beauty of the Austrian countryside, which, the *Grazer Tagblatt* noted, was of particular interest to visitors.[67] The section also offered film programmes, including *Sport in Austria*, *Winter in the Tyrol*, and *Summer in Austria*, and a changing 'moving pictures' show, promoting 'comfortable and cheap' journeys by rail and car across the Austrian landscape.[68]

Figure 2.3 Exhibition view 'Austria in London', 1934. Austrian National Library, Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung. https://anno.onb.ac.at

Throughout, the visual arts bolstered the duality between city and countryside as a means to define German-Austrian identity. Minister of Commerce Fritz Stockinger noted in his introduction in the exhibition catalogue: 'By her intimate relations with her southern and eastern neighbours, Austria's art, although indeed a branch of German art, has always shown marked characteristics of its own'.[69] Stockinger's outline highlighted these characteristics from a longue durée perspective, starting with the 'middle-class unpretentiousness' of Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller in the eighteenth century until 'modern art for Vienna began with Gustav Klimt'. Concurrently, 'in the alpine provinces, Egger-Lienz achieved the same end [to break loose from naturalism], but in a more forceful manner'.[70] Somewhat outside this trajectory, Oskar Kokoschka finds mention in line with 'rare traces of post-war German expressionism' in Austria. The two main frameworks for Austrian contemporary art are Klimt's decorative 'Vienna 1900' and Egger-Lienz's 'more forceful' rural modernism. The craft and design section also mirrored this trajectory, moving from companies that had made their name in Vienna in Habsburg times, such as the silver manufacturer Klinkosch and the glass company Lobmeyer, to regional production of Gmunden ceramics and 'Tyrolese peasant ware'.[71]

The exhibition's overarching narrative emphasised Austria's shift towards a small state defined by its provinces alongside Vienna as an imperial remnant. In the catalogue to *Kampf um die Stadt* (2010), the first exhibition addressing this duality of city and countryside from a Viennese perspective, historian Wolfgang Kos noted that 'the fight for the city after 1918 was a fight against Vienna'.[72] Yet based on the nature of the displays in London, Vienna's importance was hardly negated. The importance of 'old' Vienna is repeated continuously in the exhibition narrative and set-up. The commercial aspect of the show was emphasised in the 'Shopping Street', for example, designed by the young Viennese architect Zeno Kosak (1904–1985) and decorated with playful frescoes of historic Vienna by Zülow and the stage designer Max Frey (1902–1955). Leading down a broad, simple hallway, they present a Gothic and Baroque Vienna, with little coves leading into showrooms for separate commercial exhibitors, focusing on fashion, sports equipment, and the decorative arts.

With the frescos in the shopping street mimicking historical Vienna, the exhibition narrative is enforced in the commercial section, showing the capital in a nostalgic light while showcasing contemporary luxury products. The city was a remnant of old glory. Meanwhile, the countryside represented modernity and rejuvenation just as much as it offered a national identification. In this sense, the polarisation between the city and the countryside led to a reversal in the official presentation of the two poles: the rural included modernity. The city was enshrined in the past. Staged as a point of departure for a new presentation of Austrian art, industry and culture, *Austria in London* inaugurated the country's international positioning as a modern yet distinctly rural country and emphasised how 'alpine modernity' was used as a tool of soft diplomacy by the Austrofascist government. Rather than emphasising the particularity of Tyrolean modernism, as *Tiroler Künstler* did, in London in 1934, rural modernism became an integral part of the national display.

'Austria's main export good is the country's beauty':[73] At the World's Fair

The 1937 World's Fair in Paris culminated in Austria's presentation as a rural and modern country with a lasting presence.[74] While *Austria in London* was still organised at a time when the Austrofascist regime stood at its very beginning, the 1937 World's Fairs

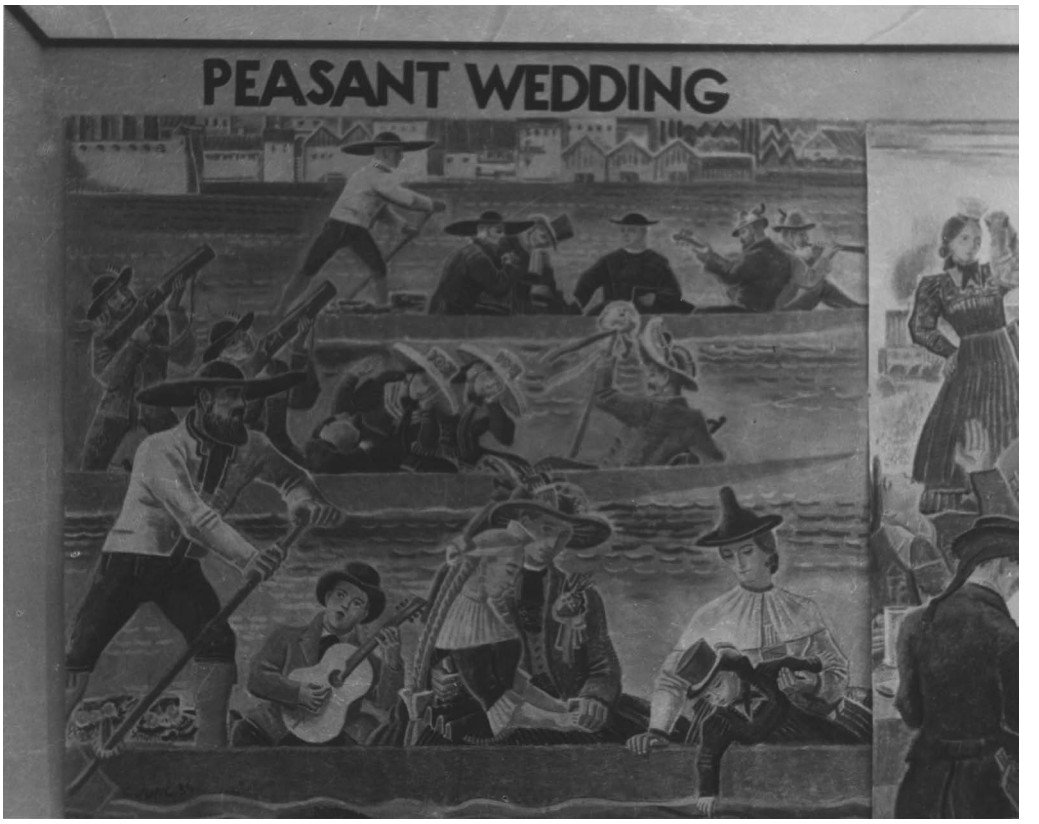

Figure 2.4 Exhibition view 'Austria in London', 1934. Austrian National Library, Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung. https://anno.onb.ac.at

in Paris took place at the height of its efforts and only a few months before Austria was annexed to the Third Reich. At this moment in time, when National Socialism was looming and already supported by a considerable part of the Austrian population, the country's official presentation was, ironically, more unified than before, and the provinces played an essential role in this. On the way to Paris, the 1935 World's Fair in Brussels initiated a departure that shrouded the traditionalist roots of the regime in a modern light, facilitated through the growing official attention towards tourism. Suggestions to build a Baroque-style building or an alpine farmhouse were quickly rejected by Viktor Doret, who was not only in charge of the Austrian pavilion but also the manager of the Austrian tourist board in Brussels, in favour of a 'modern and neutral building'.[75] The official competition for the 1935 pavilion was instigated by Holzmeister, who, in his introduction to the competition, stressed the importance of 'the presentation of tourism and luxury goods', specifically requiring avoidance of a separation of the two in the displays and, instead, to give a 'tasteful presentation of the country's beauty' which combined both elements.[76] Contrasting the architect's earlier negative attitude towards tourism as a danger of *Verkitschung* ('making kitsch') of the Austrian landscape, as he had warned in 1933, Holzmeister accepted tourism as an

integral part of Austria's national representation for Brussels, perfectly compatible with the country's image as a nation of culture ('Kulturnation'). For the competition for the pavilion, he outlined a search for a 'modern' but 'characteristically Austrian' building, which would represent all nine Austrian provinces and give consideration to industry 'as long as it was compatible with tasteful touristic advertising'.[77] What this could look like is visible from some of the 174 entries for the competition of the pavilion, including a sketch by architects Eugen Kastner (1897–1945) and Fritz Waage (1898–1968), which shows a minimalist, tiled building with large glass windows. To the right side, a large-scale alpine landscape building features on the wall, while behind one of the glass windows, a simple vitrine shows traditional furniture and pottery. Women in folk dress complete the image. Even though Kastner and Waage's entry did not win, the selected design by Oswald Haerdtl (1899–1959), who was already involved in the 1925 Paris pavilion, adopted similar elements: a modernist, curved building structure with a large panoramic glass front, simple at the outside with the possibility to integrate rural visual props in the interior. Haerdtl's design was so successful that he also won the competition for the Austrian pavilion in Paris in 1937, which, in terms of concept and layout, was an improved, more spectacular version of the Brussels design.

Together, the World's Fairs of the 1930s show how the alpine landscape was integrated into an image of Austria with the help of the latest technologies, especially film and photography. With the title *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, the focus on art and technology in modern life, film, and photography offered an ideal combination of two central aspects of the exhibition. For the 1935 pavilion, Haerdtl had initially planned to present modern painting and sculpture in the pavilion's main hall. The organisers rejected this in favour of setting the tourism section centre stage, which included film screenings and photomontages on the walls, presenting Austrian sights, people, and landscapes. Published under headlines such as 'Public and sacral building', 'Summer in Austria', 'Folk dress and customs', and 'Sport in Austria', the walls of the pavilion's central hall were lined with photo collages of Austrian monuments, folk traditions, and landscapes. Resembling more a 'wallpaper' than artistic representations, the photographs served as a background to present what was termed 'produce defined by the landscape'.[78] They included examples from the decorative arts, as well as products from the optical industries (Eumig, Optische Werke C Reichert) and gold- and silverware (Klinkosch) in vitrines positioned in front of the alpine wallpaper. In Paris in 1937, a similar formula was applied.

The 1937 World's Fair has long been seen as the height of competition between Fascism and Communism before the breakout of the Second World War, with the spectacular juxtaposition between the German and the Soviet pavilions at the centre.[79] For Austria, the presentation in Paris was not so much based on spectacular reinvention as it was on the tried and tested formula in Brussels. Indeed, many of its central actors remained the same. First and foremost, they included Holzmeister, whose sphere of influence had vastly grown in the preceding years: he was the representative of the New Austrian Werkbund, responsible for the Austrian participation in the Pontifical pavilion at the World's Fair (1937), and a member of the committee for the architectural competition for the Austrian pavilion.[80] Haerdtl was the architect and the artistic director of the pavilion. In the final version of the building, he sought to make it 'patriotic' from foundation to finish. Since building in wood had been established as a national form of architecture – not least in a publication by Holzmeister on the same topic – the skeleton of the functionalist

Annemarie Selinko: Das Interview der „Bühne"

PHOTOS SKALL

Prof. Oswald Haerdtl

PROF. OSWALD HAERDTL:

„UNSER PARISER PAVILLON..."

DIE GESCHICHTE VON 79 ARBEITSTAGEN

In Wiens Kaffeehäusern werden die „Heimkehrer" begrüßt. Um ihren Tisch scharen sich Freunde, Bekannte, kaum Bekannte und ganz Fremde. Und die „Heimkehrer", die ersten, die von der Pariser Weltausstellung bereits zurückgekommen sind, lassen große Augenzeugenberichte von Stapel. Sie sind sehr interessant geworden und müssen alles ganz genau erzählen. Gibt es wirklich Weltwunder zu sehen? Und wie schaut unser Pavillon aus? Erregt unser Pavillon wirklich großes Aufsehen? Ja, unser Pavillon erregt großes Aufsehen. Das berichten alle Heimkehrer. Paris gibt sich jeden Abend Rendezvous auf den prachtvollen Terrassen des österreichischen Pavillons. Unser Pavillon hat einen Hof, nein — es ist kein richtiger Hof, es ist ein Alpengarten, märchenhaft schön. Man geht nicht durch diesen Alpengarten, man schreitet über ihn hinweg. Über eine durchsichtige Brücke. Eine Wand unseres Pavillons besteht aus einem Wunder: Scheinwerfer beleuchten die größte Photomontage der Welt. Man sitzt abends im Terrassencafé und kann den Blick nicht abwenden von der strahlend beleuchteten, unerhört plastischen Photographie der großen österreichischen Bergstraßen. „Man sieht jede Tankstelle der Glocknerstraße...", berichtet ein Heimkehrer ganz aufgeregt. Und ein anderer, etwas romantischer veranlagt, meint: „Man hat Sehnsucht nach Österreich, wenn man unseren Pavillon ansieht."

DER STILLE HEIMKEHRER

Übrigens: ich habe auch zwei Engländer und einen Amerikaner gesprochen, die in Paris gewesen sind. Trockene Business-Men, sie sprachen von den einzelnen Ausstellungsgebäuden und erklärten immerzu: „Technisch unerhört! Phantastischer Aufwand — —" Vom österreichischen Pavillon erzählten sie, daß er wirklich tiefen Eindruck macht. Trotz der phänomenalen Riesenbauten der großen und vor allem sehr reichen Staaten. „Künstlerisch hochinteressant", sagten die Herren. Und das muß die allgemeine Meinung in Paris sein, denn die Herren sind wirklich trockene Business-Men, die sich für Kunst nicht sehr interessieren und bestimmt nur die allgemeine Meinung wiedergeben.

So schart man sich um die Heimkehrer und läßt sie die Pariser Wunder-Ausstellung beschreiben. Gestern jedoch sprach ich mit einem Mann, der wohl der stillste aller Heimkehrer ist. Ja, er war in der Pariser Weltausstellung. Er war sogar bei der Eröffnung des österreichischen Pavillons dabei. Mehr noch: er war auch beim Bau dabei, das ging nicht anders.

Wie war die Eröffnung unseres Pavillons? „Sehr feierlich, sehr schön", berichtet der Mann. Und dann erzählt er gleich von andern Pavillons. Vom italienischen zum Beispiel, in dem eine Riesen-Glasschale steht, ein richtiges Weltwunder. Und vom Gebäude eines nordischen Staates, an dessen Außenwand Wasser niederrieselt. (Nicht unglücklicherweise, sondern absichtlich, es ist eine sehr faszinierende Wand.)

Der Raum „Industrie und Technik" mit der Riesen-Photomontage der österreichischen Gebirgsstraßen

Aber ich will vom österreichischen Pavillon hören. Ist es wahr, daß er einer der ersten Bauten war, die fertiggestellt wurden? Ist es wahr, daß unser Pavillon rechtzeitig, daß er beinahe ganz pünktlich eröffnet werden konnte?

„Ja", bestätigt dieser stillste Heimkehrer, „das ist wahr. Gott sei Dank, wir waren ziemlich pünktlich. Es war gar nicht so einfach, denn in die Bauzeit fielen die Streiks der Pariser Arbeiter und alle möglichen Schwierigkeiten. Trotz allem: in neunundsiebzig Arbeitstagen wurde der österreichische Pavillon errichtet."

Und schon wieder schweift er ab und erzählt von einem Riesenfreskogemälde, das Piccasso für einen noch halbfertigen Bau malt.

„Andere Ausstellungsbesucher wissen viel mehr über den österreichischen Pavillon als Sie", sage ich vorwurfsvoll. „Warum erzählen Sie mir nicht mehr davon?" „Verzeihung", antwortet der Mann bescheiden,

Figure 2.5 The exhibition space 'Industry and Technology' with the giant photomontage of the Austrian mountain roads in the Austrian pavilion of the *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* in Paris, 1937. Design by Oswald Haerdtl. Printed in *Die Bühne* 452 (15 July 1937), 2. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

building was made from wood and filled with mineral-bonded wood wool boards to use the recently developed Novadom building technique.[81] Special lighting lit the panoramic view at night while the rest of the pavilion remained in darkness. Curtains fixed on either end of the reinforced the image of an alpine panorama as if viewed from a hotel room.[82] Tourism and technology were combined through the products exhibited – including, for example, fast trains by the Vienna Locomotive Company and hunting weapons by Steyr-Daimler-Puch – and the overall design and presentation of the pavilion. As in Brussels, the key to the presentation was the Austrian landscape as a vital catalyst to the country's industry and culture, with the difference that the decorative arts were presented separately and with greater emphasis.[83]

The central element of pavilion was a show-stopping photomontage, 8.66 meters in height and 30.25 meters in length. Reaching across the curved inner walls of the pavilion, it showed a panorama that combined some of the country's most recent advancements in alpine road construction: to the left, the Packstraße, connecting the provinces of Styria and Carinthia, built in 1930, at the centre the Großglockner Hochalpenstraße, a prestige-project completed in 1936 leading up Austria's highest mountain; to the right, the Gesäusestraße in Styria, leading through the rugged Gesäuse valley, completed in 1921. The montage was commissioned by Haerdtl and completed by the Viennese photographer and graphic designer Robert Haas (1898–1997) with photographs provided by the Austrian Ministry for Trade and Transport.[84] A combination of different photo panels, Haas enlarged and modified the images to emphasise the beauty of the Austrian natural landscape. A field of gentian and crocus flowers at the centre leads the view to a snow-covered alpine landscape, connected by wild river creeks, forests and a rugged snow field. The bright blue sky in the background was constructed with coloured fabric panels, on which Haas sprayed gentle clouds with white paint. Modern roads wind through the landscape in adventurous ways, while cars and buses stop at a panoramic viewpoint to the left of the centre. With every element in the image edited to perfection, the montage displayed a tightly constructed world of national beauty accessible to visitors through modern technological achievements.

At first sight, the most significant element in Haas' montage is the alpine landscape. However, the roads that cut through it are just as crucial, as are the buses and cars driving along them. They promise easy access to this landscape, signal that there are tours that can be booked to visit and suggest that the high Alps are no longer reserved for experienced alpinists but can be reached by just about anyone. The busses in Haas' image suggest this sense of growing access to holidays: standing next to automobiles, they represent a social leveller through which the masses could enjoy the Austrian landscape. Haas's photomontage can only be described as wildly idealised, using experimental photographic techniques to promote Austria as a perfect touristic country. This presentation was in line with the main idea of the pavilion overall: with the glass front functioning as an oversized hotel window, the building invited visitors to a presentation of Austria as a country for summer and winter holidays, which offered modern hotels and road facilities and accessible natural landscapes.

The exhibition catalogue also had a striking design, wrapped in shiny silver foil with the word 'l'Autriche' set across in bright blue. Above and below, the word 'Austria' features serially in a relief print. Echoing the alpine landscape of the pavilion design, the silver insinuates a snow-covered landscape in the sun, while the bright blue recalls the sunny days recorded on picture postcards. The exhibition narrative resembled that of *Austria in London* in that the presentation of Vienna focused on old imperial glory,

advertised, not least, with an emphasis on hotels such as the 'Imperial' and 'Hotel Bristol', which each were represented with large dioramas in the main pavilion building. Viennese cuisine again played an important role, too, with a traditional Viennese café offering delicacies served by Austrian waitresses in maid's uniforms. Outside the capital, the country was presented as a place for sports and travel, covering the whole first floor of the pavilion and, aside from special sections on activities such as alpinism, hunting, fishing, and golf, represented by different companies, included folk fashion designs by luxury companies such as Humhal, as well as toy designs. The decorative arts were promoted strongly, with porcelain designs by Ena Rottenberg (1893–1953) for the Augarten porcelain manufacture featuring next to regional places of production for glass painting, ceramics, and textile design from Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, and Styria.

Austria's presentation as a quaint rural country could also be found in smaller exhibits, such as fabric designs by the young artist Lotte Hahn (1906–2002). Specially commissioned for the World's Fair, her design 'Austrian landmarks' shows how Austria's position as a rural nation of culture was interweaved even in minor details. In a review of Austrian design at the fair in *Österreichische Kunst*, critic Max Bude emphasised how Austrian textile design was 'wholly different' from its French and English counterparts because of its playfulness and 'independence from earlier epochs'.[85] Bude pronounces the modernity of Austrian designs while underlining the importance of a casual style to leave the 'most natural' impact on the modern home.[86] Next to the description, a detail photograph shows Hahn's design in black and white print. In a busy fabric pattern, Vienna's St Stephen's Cathedral is set side by side, among others, the *Faustst*adt, the symbol of the Salzburg festival, the mythological lindworm creature representing Carinthia's capital Klagenfurt, Innsbruck's Golden Roof, as well as the White Horse Inn at Lake Wolfgang, popularised in 1930 with an operetta by Ralph Benatzky of the same name. Interspersed with playful flower patterns, Austrian flags and skiers, Hahn's design offers a quaint visual summary of Austria's new rural identity.

An exhibition of the fine arts was missing from the pavilion altogether, shown instead as part of the international display at the Musee du Jeu de Paume.[87] The selection was 'as diverse as possible, to offer a faithful image of what makes out Austrian art today'.[88] An introduction in *Österreichische Kunst* particularly emphasised the balance in showing works of different provinces and regional museums: 'The whole of Austria has contributed to this exhibition in a never before seen wholesomeness', printed in bold letters.[89] Curated by the director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Alfred Stix, the contemporary section of the Austrian exhibition was remarkably similar to that in London: Klimt featured strongly, with a whole room dedicated to his paintings, as did Egger-Lienz ('the giant of the alpine country that is Austria') and Faistauer.[90] The latter featured Catholic imagery and Salzburg landscapes, while Egger-Lienz's work was once more positioned as the strong counterpoint to Klimt's ornamental portraiture. Considering the selection in line with the pavilion's overall presentation, official representation in the fine arts with an emphasis on rural modernism had consolidated several years before the same strategy was adopted for broader national representation. In Paris 1937, this could seamlessly be integrated to reduce ideological views of the Austrofascist regime to a minimum to position Austria as a wholly 'depoliticised', happy, and beautiful tourist country.[91]

While Haas' photomontage is the primary visual example for this presentation, the magazine *Der Gute Film* emphasised that 'film cannot be missed from such an important event'.[92] Particular importance was thus also given to so-called cultural films

(*Kulturfilme*), which sought to offer brief visual introductions to the country. Their titles are telling, including 'In God's Alpine Garden', 'Folk Costumes in Austria' and 'Village Symphony', altogether reinforcing the image of Austria as an idyllic rural country.[93] At the same time, modern and urban lifes were not forgotten, featuring 'Dance as an expression of its time' and 'Viennese fashion', as well as *A Day in Vienna* (1935), which already had an English, international version after being shown in Brussels two years earlier and was one of the most successful commercial productions of its era.[94] Similar to the presentation of Vienna in Brussels and London, the Austrian capital shone predominantly as a musical city in the film, building on past glories that fit into a more comprehensive image of Austria as a nation of culture.[95]

Yet below the surface, the situation was hardly as rosy: antisemitism against the Jewish participants wearing Austrian folk costumes in the pavilion's Viennese café, such as bandmaster Joseph Rosenfeld and his all-female ensemble 'Orchestre de Dames Viennoises', were already ripe in 1935 in Brussels. Official defences against antisemitic comments were mellow. As Stockinger argued, Rosenfeld was not only 'artistically unobjectionable' but also an Austrian citizen and thus entitled to contribute to the pavilion.[96] He failed to mention that more complaints against a Jewish person representing 'German Austria' had been received. This incident exemplifies how, until Austria's *Anschluss* to the Third Reich in March 1938, Austrian Jews were not excluded from participation in public life nor from helping to construct Austrian national identity abroad. Nonetheless, definitions of Austrian identity as 'German' were increasingly used as justifications for antisemitic attacks. The height of the discrepancy between how Austria presented itself at home and abroad in this regard occurred in Paris. When Haas' photomontage project was almost complete, the government decided that 'it should not become public that the artist of such a significant contribution to the Austrian pavilion was a Jew'.[97] Haas was forced to take on an assistant, the painter and exhibition architect Günther Baszel (1902–1973), who completed the montage in Paris and received prominent mention in the catalogue and a Silver Medal in Haas' place. Constructing the image of a happy rural Austria by 1937 thus had a significant price: the erasure of anyone falling out of line with the official presentation of Austria as a German-Catholic, rural state.[98]

Exhibitions as a national mirror and their discontents

By the 1930s, the alpine landscape had taken centre stage in official presentations of Austria abroad. While it may be tempting to explain this by the fact that the Alps played an important role in the state symbolism of the Austrofascist regime, its significance was, in fact, deeply embedded in Austrian interwar culture. Austria's turn towards alpine-inspired modernism, which allowed a redefinition of the country's cultural identity, began to develop in the 1920s before being submerged into state identity in the 1930s. Adopting some of the rhetoric surrounding regional exhibitions in the 1920s, such as *Tiroler Künstler*, the country's international representation in the 1930s shows how the rural provinces were transformed into the defining element of Austrian culture in which, unusually, it functioned as the *modern* half of Austrian identity, compared to the rather more nostalgic presentation of Vienna. Indeed, if not explicitly referring to Vienna, 'Austrian' quickly meant 'rural' and 'alpine'. As such, the countryside and smaller towns close to a picturesque landscape became an intrinsic part of a modern, post-imperial Austrian national and state identity. Even though rural elements of culture played an essential role in other Habsburg successor states, too, considering, for example, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania, the

strong ties to the alpine landscape – its nationalisation – gave Austria's ties to 'the rural' unusual significance. After 1933/1934, when the Austrofascist regime came to power, official publications had an intensely propagandistic tone, but their presentation of Austria did not significantly differ from the preceding years. Most notably, they aimed to present a more unified image of the country, which paid greater attention to the different provinces. As Austria's regional, national, and international representations at the time indicate, the growing visibility of rural themes was manifested by the very nature of exhibitions as their own 'symbolic universe'.[99] Returning to the questions asked at the outset of this chapter about the symbolic role of the alpine landscape in interwar culture, these exhibitions highlight how Austrian modernity became intrinsically tied to the country's rural provinces. Moreover, the organisational involvement of figures such as Holzmeister and the celebration of 'provincial' artists such as Egger-Lienz show that the provinces after 1918 offered a vital point of reinvention for the formation of modern Austrian culture overall. Facilitated by the steady exchange between rural and urban centres that the cultural and political emancipation of the provinces after the First World War had brought with it, this led to an unprecedented visibility of rural themes that could easily be absorbed into broader narratives about Austrian national culture – at home and abroad.

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3 Paradise of Leisure

The Modern Countryside in Tourism, Fashion, and Popular Culture

Grubschanze near Kitzbühel (1925) shows a ski flyer mid-air with arms stretched out against the bright blue sky. Below him, crowds of people are watching, lined up against the steep hill. They are dressed in fashionable, colourful clothes, fur stolas, and English caps, making a cosmopolitan crowd of onlookers, themselves standing on the slope on skis. In the background, the idealised, ancient Kitzbühel old town catches the last glimpses of sunlight. To the far left, a photographer records the jump with a small, handheld camera, implying a growing media interest in sporting events. Playing with light and shade on a sunny winter day, the painting belongs to a series of works by Tyrolean artist Alfons Walde (1891–1958), who chronicled his hometown of Kitzbühel as a glamorous tourist hotspot and, simultaneously, as a traditional alpine village. In art and visual culture, hardly anyone engaged more closely with such developments than Walde. Active in Kitzbühel from the 1920s until the 1950s, the artist paved the way for an easily identifiable image of rural Austria without erasing the modernisation processes that took place in the Alps at this time. He filtered elements of local culture and synthesised them with a modern formal language and a range of 'modern' topics, most significantly ski tourism. By defining a typology of 'Austrianness', Walde constructed an essential position in Austrian painting after 1918: as the sociologist John Urry has emphasised, 'identity almost everywhere has to be produced partly out of the images constructed for tourists'.[1] Walde did precisely that. By offering simple visual solutions to aspects of tourist culture, Walde responded to local conditions, while his abstraction and repetition of themes allowed their integration into a larger national narrative. The key to this formula was a careful amalgamation between elements identifiable as 'modern' and 'traditionally Austrian', with tourism as the connector. Indeed, by the time the Austrian pavilions of the 1935 and 1937 World's Fairs made tourism their primary focus, summer and winter holidays had become core elements of the Austrian national narrative. In 1927, Ludwig Leer, the regional representative of the Burgenland province, emphasised that 'in no other country has tourism the political, yes, patriotic role that it has for us. Only tourism can spin the thousands of threads that connect us with the Austrian way of thinking and feeling'.[2] Tourism was a central factor of interwar Austrian economics, politics, and culture, packaging the country 'for consumption as the location of exquisite culinary experiences, cultural wealth and exciting sporting activities, all in stunning surroundings inhabited by a friendly people'.[3] From the early 1920s onwards, serious efforts were made to compensate for the popular tourist destinations lost during the war, including Bohemian spa towns and Italian alpine resorts.

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-4

Measures taken included an expanded electrification of railway lines, visa waivers for German, British and Czechoslovak visitors, and a growth in touristic marketing, which sought to show that 'in Austria, the old could blend seamlessly with the new'.[4] Tourism was, thus, also seen as a bridge between cosmopolitan Vienna and Austria's rural provinces, and quickly rose to prominence as a promise of renewal, modernisation, and a better future for the whole country.

In 1923, the writer Ottokar Janetschek published 'Tourism in Austria' in the Viennese newspaper *Neues Wiener Journal,* in which he emphasised the need to modernise the countryside for touristic purposes: 'A thousand elements of patriarchal backwardness are to be done away with, people on the countryside are to be taught some finesse and friendliness, as well as adaptions to the modern world'.[5] Drawing attention to a lack of modern facilities ('one only needs to think of the impossible lavatories and its sometimes primitive-unhygienic facilities') and of state support, Janetschek pledged for growing commitment to foreign tourist advertisement and the introduction of 'modernity' in terms of amenities and transport.[6] In subsequent years, the number of tourists in the country did, indeed, increase. By 1929, it had almost doubled from 2.5 million in 1922 to 4.2 million visitors annually.[7] Janetschek's article emphasises the intrinsic link between tourism and modernity. This also reverberates in Dean MacCannell's seminal study *The Tourist*, which understands tourism as an essentially modern phenomenon, marked by 'alienation, displacement, surrealist juxtapositions, shifting grounds, and other pomo delicacies'.[8] However, in relation to MacCannell's argument, tourism's most distinctive feature in interwar Austrian modernity, was 'its artificial preservation and reconstruction' of the non-modern world, inventing an idealised past for mass consumption, encapsulated in the 'tourist gaze' as an ostensibly surface-oriented and simplified way of seeing the world.[9] On the one hand, the tourist gaze offered a break from everyday routines with the promise of adventure, entertainment, and leisure; on the other hand, it imposed a reduced way of looking at the place visited, focusing on attractions, consumer goods, and events made or performed with the tourist in mind. Not only did these aspects prove to be essential features of Austria's construction as a 'holiday land', but they also shaped how the country was visualised in popular art and visual culture. Historian Werner Telesko has argued that the turn of the twentieth century marked the time when canonical motifs of touristic landscapes were first established.[10] These predominantly focused on people in folk costumes, natural landscapes, railways, and hotel buildings (Figure 3.1). Alfred Roller's poster for the Schneeberg-Bahn railway (1897) is exemplary here, visualising technological progress with the allegory of a man with enormous wings blowing steam. On his back, figures in urban dress stand watching the landscape, while in the far distance, a *Schutzhaus* ('mountain shelter') with a smoking chimney promises comfort and warmth even in the remotest areas.

After 1918, such presentations of comfortable yet adventurous and entertaining locations became the key to the fashionable presentation of the countryside. Visual images and material culture were formative in this construction, leading to a veritable explosion of rural-themed popular culture. This included a flurry of film, operetta, and music productions, as well as advertising posters, fashion, and souvenirs. A particularly well-known example is the popular operetta *The White Horse Inn*, which premiered in Berlin in 1930.[11] Shown also in Vienna, Zagreb, London, New York, and Paris in the following years, it not only became a highly successful representation of rural Austria on stage but

Figure 3.1 Alfred Roller. *Schneebergbahn bei Wien*, 1898. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

also had a decisive impact on fashion with a trend called 'á la Tyrolienne' and the circulation of an image of alpine Austria that was simultaneously cosmopolitan and rural.[12] The operetta, playing in small-town St Wolfgang in the famous Salzkammergut lake district, was an ideal combination of what Austrian rural modernity ought to represent: joyful, cosy, depicting a beautiful natural landscape, and romances between locals and summer guests. Each element of the 'Austrian flavour' of the operetta was readily developed in photographs, films, and advertisement, masking or simply ignoring the growing political reactionism that strongly supported rural tendencies in Austrian culture as an epitome of German-Austrian tradition.

As a means of soft diplomacy, touristic culture presented the country as a pleasant and friendly space. Much like Zsolt Nagy has discussed Hungarian efforts to bolster tourism as a way of improving the country's reputation in the interwar years, Austria's role as a holiday land can be understood as part and parcel of a transformation process, in which the new state was to be defined as a peaceful and pleasant country.[13] This chapter argues that, in line with this reorientation, tourism offered artists a new conceptual framework to address the contradictions that defined Austrian modernity and to bridge fine art and popular culture. The focus thus lies on the commercialisation of modernism beyond the metropolis. With tourism-related material culture and design, Austria's construction as a touristic dreamland heightened the visibility of rural areas and folk culture *within* modern culture. It formulated a nostalgic image that had both economic viability and reinforced the country's identity as a quaint alpine state.[14] Tradition and nostalgia, in this sense, provided a 'safe reconstruction of the past' that offered the promise of stability and established values in rapidly changing times.[15] While not synonymous with tradition per se, rural culture was a dominant representational framework for tradition in Austrian culture. Touristic hotspots were predominantly rural and fashioned as locations where 'authentic' landscapes and folk culture could be experienced. Yet the 'authentic' had to be coated with a modern veneer to be accessible and comforting for the urban visitor. This combination required a specific visual language: On the one hand, it had to offer themes recognisable as rural, with a repetition of themes such as people in folk dress, rural landscapes, references to folk art and rural customs. On the other hand, it had to respond to a 'modern spirit', meaning that these images of life in the countryside had to be framed so that they did not appear retrograde but as part of contemporary culture. Shedding light on different artistic practices related to interwar rural tourist culture, the chapter emphasises that, even though urban idealising countryside views dominated, they were far from monolithic. Images of Austria as a modern holiday country were constructed by specific regional histories. They became increasingly gendered and built different imaginary landscapes for male and female audiences. Popular illustration, photography, and the graphic arts thus fashioned multiple versions of rural modernism that set tourism at their centre and connected to a rediscovery of rural artist colonies, sports, and travelling, altogether forging an enticing vision of the countryside as a paradise of leisure.

Austria's allrounder of rural modernism: Alfons Walde

The development of a tourist-inspired modernism first takes us back to Walde, whose work bore all the hallmarks of a modern art strongly tied to touristic ventures. Mixing closely with fashionable society, Walde was quick to adopt his work

in line with the changes that were taking place in Kitzbühel at the time. His connections to the local tourist industry were manifold. Kitzbühel was one of the most prominent places in interwar Austria where metropolitan and rural lives collided. As the artist Lisl Weil (1910–2006) emphasised, 'just ask a man from the colonies or a girl from Chicago, or simply anyone from some distant location – everyone knows this place [Kitzbühel], full of great snow and a good mood'.[16] Starting as a place of winter tourism in the late nineteenth century, Kitzbühel recovered from the detrimental economic effects of the war by the early 1920s. Even though it was located deep in the Alps, new railway routes meant that Kitzbühel quickly rose to prominence as an upper-class skiing location among wealthy Austrian, German, French, and British tourists.[17] It was a busy location in the winter months, buzzing with cafés, restaurants, luxury hotels, and fashion stores. By the early 1930s, Vienna's most prestigious retailers, such as the tailor Humhal, opened branches in the town, merging modern fashion with alpine-inspired interior designs by Viennese artists like Franz Zülow (1883–1963).[18] Commercial and social connections between Vienna and Kitzbühel were facilitated through tourism and led to the continuous modernisation of the town to cater to wealthy visitors, even though much of the local population remained impoverished. Yet this socio-economic imbalance was glossed over in tourist advertisements or used to interpret poverty in a romanticised manner as 'authentic' agricultural life.[19]

Connections between Vienna and Tyrol were also crucial to Walde's career. He studied architecture at Vienna's Technical University between 1910 and 1914. More interested in becoming a painter than an architect, he moved within the central artistic networks of the late Habsburg capital, including the *Neukunstgruppe*, the *Hagenbund*, and the Vienna Secession. Yet after volunteering with the *Tiroler Kaiserschützen* infantry regiment in 1914, Walde only briefly returned to Vienna before settling in Kitzbühel, where he lived for the rest of his life. In his early years back, Walde established a reputation as a *Schneemaler* ('snow painter'), focusing on scenes of traditional rural life, which he painted in bright, thick, almost three-dimensional colour.[20] Walde's weighty rural figures increasingly placed his work within the Tyrolean Modernism that was first developed around 1900 and came to be recognised outside the region through Egger-Lienz and in exhibitions such as *Tiroler Künstler*. Yet Walde took this modernisation process a step further: his scenes of rural life encompassed glamorous ski tourism and alpine sports as much as quaint genre scenes of village communities. Walde was closely confronted with the recovery of Tyrol as a touristic region as the municipal planning officer in Kitzbühel. The artist's reworking of male and female farmers, ski tourists and alpinists thereby consolidated in line with a manifestation of how post-imperial Austria could be defined.[21]

Walde's tourism-focused works recall scenes from contemporary press photography, often using peculiar viewpoints or cut-off scenes. Compared to his static, timeless genre paintings of traditional life, Walde's touristic images emphasised attributes commonly associated with masculine, alpine modernity: speed, strength, and perseverance. Based on these features, the art critic Fritz Karpfen, an enthusiastic supporter of winter sports and organiser of ski courses and group excursions, championed Walde as a promising successor to Austrian masters of the previous era and as a national artist, whose work assured authenticity through its references to local (alpine) conditions. In a review of the artist's work in the alpine magazine *Bergland*, Karpfen paid particular attention to

Walde's merging of rural and urban elements, championing his winter sports images as truly contemporary Austrian art:

> In his subconscious, the artist discovered no point in creating images that only say little to people. It matters whether one paints a skier or a still life in the twentieth century. While the still life represents the rest of a lost time […] and has nothing more to tell us, […] the skier or a similar living being is already connected to us in subject matter and relates to all of our senses, this is vibrant art.[22]

For Karpfen, Walde's depictions of winter sports adequately captured contemporary reality because they emphasised speed and progress. From this perspective, references to winter tourism were essential to modernising Austrian painting because they engaged with popular culture and contemporary reality. Walde was clearly aware of this dynamic and extended his focus on Kitzbühel's presentation as an ideal place for winter sports beyond the realm of painting. He designed numerous posters, including commissions for Kitzbühel town, the province of Tyrol, ski competitions and local sports companies such as Schlechter, Lackner-Schuh, and Oberschi.[23] Using a limited colour palette of red, white, and blue and simplified, flat visual forms, Walde developed a signature style for winter tourism in Tyrol, fit for mass consumption. In his graphic work, the modernisation of Walde's work and the touristic upturn of Kitzbühel are visualised most clearly in the artist's graphic design for the Kitzbühel brand. Initially created for the local Ski Club in 1933, the logo is a simple design of a chamois standing on top of one of three snow-white peaks with a bright blue sky behind it. The font and the logo were licensed to Walde in 1933, with strict definitions that tourist venues in the town still must adhere to today.

Walde also manifested his role as Kitzbühel's central artistic figure in the built environment. He contributed a significant infrastructural project with the Hahnenkammbahn (1926–1928). This funicular connects Kitzbühel with the Hahnenkamm mountain, representing one of Austria's earliest examples of its kind. The Hahnenkammbahn made the alpine landscape accessible to mass tourism and showed the direct involvement with which Walde represented a central modernising agent. The artist's most ambitious plan, however, was the establishment of an artists' colony on the Hahnenkamm called 'Hochkitzbühel' (see Note 14). In 1930, he bought some land and began the construction of his own *Berghaus* ('mountain house'). The building primarily functioned as an artist's studio. Boasting all the conveniences of a modern home, including a rooftop pool, it became a meeting point for visiting artists and socialites. A journalist who reported on the 'Bohemians on the Hahnenkamm' and the 'highest studio in Austria' in the *Wiener Journal* in 1933 called the building a 'magical house' and praised it as a place for social gatherings, where Viennese high society mixed (see Note 15). Walde was even credited with bringing wealthy tourists to the mountains, who, enticed by his paintings, wanted to visit his mountain studio.[24] Quickly, Viennese dailies promoted Walde's construction plans as a 'hamlet of villas', which 'would surely become one of the most interesting Tyrolean villages both in an architectural as well as in a social sense', where 'high life' ensured entertainment throughout the seasons.[25] In the end, Walde's plan of an artists' colony never materialised, even though the sculptor Gustinus Ambrosi (1893–1975) and the architect Clemens Holzmeister (1886–1983) had their villas built nearby, helping to transform the Hahnenkamm into a meeting point of high society, including well-to-do Viennese visitors, members of aristocratic houses from across Europe, and film, and opera stars.[26]

It's a man's world: Selling the Austrian landscape

Despite these many innovative facets in his approach to the Tyrolean landscape and the role of tourism within it, Walde's work nonetheless fits within the conservative, patriarchal framework of his home province. His essentialising of Tyrol as a place of 'modern tradition' was strictly male-dominated and easily reverberated with the patriarchal ideals of Austrian reactionary politics. Returning to Hermann Bahr's description of Tyrol as 'forceful and masculine', the artist's figures echoed characterisations of the region as a masculine place: Women are present but strictly framed by the male gaze as erotic alpine nudes or busty farmer's wives and mothers, whose soft, rounded shapes juxtaposed the jarred, angular forms of their male counterparts. Similarly, female skiers are reduced to curvaceous silhouettes or a pair of well-shaped legs. Dressed in luxurious clothing and furs, Walde's female tourists carry an erotic charge, which insinuates a promise of clandestine promiscuities. Recalling the proverb 'Auf der Alm gibt's koa Sünd' ('there is no sin on the mountains'), this male gaze reinforced ideas of romantic adventure widely established around alpine tourism.[27] Luis Trenker, a significant figure in Walde's network as one of the biggest international stars of alpinism in the 1920s and 1930s, even dedicated a particular subchapter in his popular book *Mountains in the Snow* (1932) to women and skiing, which emphasised the role of romance on skiing holidays, particularly for the male participant.[28] Drawing on the popular image of the *Skihaserl* ('ski-bunny') as a young, attractive female skier, which was frequently cited in the illustrated press at the time, touristic images built a fantasy of male rejuvenation in the Alps that presented women as passive and available for the male adventurer. Women became part of the holiday experience, as opposed to the male figures, who were the ones experiencing. Walde's depictions in this context corresponded with a broader range of touristic poster designs, which visualise Joanne P Sharp's notion that 'women are scripted into the national imaginary not as equal to the nation but as symbolic of it'.[29] One such example is *Winter in Austria* (1933) (Figure 3.2) for the Federal Ministry of Trade and Transport by Lois Gaigg (1905–1944) and Joseph Binder (1898–1972), Austria's most prominent graphic designer in the first half of the twentieth century.[30]

The modern staging of the woman promises a winter holiday that combines nature, comfort, and romantic adventure, advertised with the eroticisation of the skier, whose 'curves' resemble the mountain peaks in the background. The eroticised New Woman as the blonde Austrian ideal thereby functioned as a representative of the country as much as the landscape itself. By comparison – and Walde's work is exemplary for this – men became the conquerors of the mountains, altogether fulfilling the simplistic messaging demanded of the tourist gaze. A repetition of similar motifs and the consistent pairing of modern and rural elements thus helped to construct Tyrol as an ideal leisure space, supported by official channels such as the Federal Ministry of Trade and Transport and perpetuated in the work of designers and artists, who committed their artistic production to the country's touristic transformation. However, this successful formation of Austrian rural modernity through tourism was only one aspect of how the countryside became reinvented as a leisure location. Other outlets, such as the illustrated press and fashion illustration, forged different, decidedly more playful images at women's hands. Nowhere is this more visible than in relation to the Salzkammergut Lake district, the dream landscape of the Viennese middle classes, even more so than Tyrol.

Figure 3.2 Lois Gaigg and Joseph Binder. *Winter in Austria*, 1933. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at. © designaustria

Reinventing the Salzkammergut: The Zinkenbach Painters' Colony

A mountainous area and important location for salt production, stretching out between the Austrian provinces of Salzburg, Styria, and Upper Austria, the Salzkammergut became a central summer retreat ('*Sommerfrische*') in the late nineteenth century as Emperor Francis Joseph spent most of his summers in the region in the spa town of Bad Ischl.[31] The Salzkammergut thus also became the summer residence of Vienna's upper classes, expanding to other towns around the nearby lakes of Bad Ischl, such as St Wolfgang and St Gilgen on Lake Wolfgang, Unterach on Attersee Lake and Bad Aussee near Grundlsee Lake.[32] As 'the summer branch of home', numerous villas were built as temporary residences on the lakes, and artists spent prolonged vacations in the region.[33] Gustav Klimt, for example, spent his summers on Attersee Lake from 1910 to 1916. His stays not only resulted in impressionist landscape paintings of the glistening lake and picturesque villages but also a series of photographs of the artist and his companion, the fashion designer Emilie Flöge, by Emma Bacher, Heinrich Böhler, and Friedrich G Walker.[34] Depicting the pair in floating reform dresses and kaftans, punting, and walking in the green landscape surrounding the lake, these photographs evoke the impression of a pastoral escape to nature, which represented a central aspect in the romantic ideal of rejuvenation for the Vienna Secession. In illustrated magazines such as *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, these photographs manifested the *Sommerfrische* as a time for healing and creativity, drawing on the city escape as an essential aspect of life reform.

Even though the Salzkammergut is most closely associated with Vienna 1900, the old *Sommerfrische* structures were quickly updated in the 1920s and 1930s. A 1931 article in the fashionable magazine *Die Bühne* offers readers a nostalgic look back in time, conjuring the heydays of the Sommerfrische at the turn of the century when 'one was content in a small vernacular room … one did not need a hall, so long as there was a terrace or a social room, where about twice a week a touring magician, ventriloquist or beloved young comedian gave an evening show'.[35] Such quaint encounters with rural life had transformed fundamentally by the 1920s: the villas changed ownership or were uninhabited, and the untouched lakeside turned into busy lidos. And yet, 'somehow time stands still here. The Salzkammergut remains the *Sommerfrische* of Youth'.[36] Removed from the romantic image of the bright blue lake in Klimt's paintings and elaborate, artistic reform dresses, the Salzkammergut of the interwar years became a location of contemporary summer fun. The photographs and images accompanying the text in *Die Bühne* focus on young women in bathing suits on boats, wearing trainers, tanned skin, and windswept, short finger waves. Erni Kniepert's (1911–1990) illustrations on the final page of the article transform the Salzkammergut into a glamorous location with art-deco style drawings, in which fashionable women watch a regatta and play with small children by the lakeside. The drawings are simple, stressing elongated forms and simple lines. Recalling its artist's primary occupation as a costume designer, the drawings resemble fashion sketches, balancing out the sentimentality for the past in the text with imagery encapsulating a contemporary moment. Precisely this tension between nostalgia and modernisation underlined the dynamics of summer holidays in the Salzkammergut more broadly: It represented an idealised image of rural life for urban visitors, paired with a light melancholy for the Habsburg Empire and an emphasis on fashionable contemporary society. *Die Bühne* and its artists played a central role in how this image was constructed in cosmopolitan circles. Connecting an interest in theatre, dance, fashion and the fine arts, the magazine, founded in 1924, represented a platform dedicated to a rich imagery of holidays in the Austrian countryside each summer.

Before returning to how this played out on the magazine's pages, it is necessary to outline the connections of the Salzkammergut as a place of artists' summer retreat. Indeed, while Klimt's sojourns on Lake Attersee have received much attention and were successfully promoted in the press, the interwar years saw the establishment of a different artist colony in the area, which highlights the continuous popularity of the region among cosmopolitan figures and how this shaped Austrian visual culture after 1918: the Zinkenbach painters' colony at Lake Wolfgang. Updating the notion of artist colonies as utopian visions of a non-hierarchical community of creators working together in an inspirational rural environment, the Zinkenbach painters' colony reinvented the *Sommerfrische* image while building on established notions of the summer retreat as artistic rejuvenation.[37] Coming into existence in the late 1920s, the group, also called the 'Malschiff' ('painters' ship') by the artists, was first mentioned in the press as an artist colony in the early 1930s. It predominantly consisted of a group of Viennese cultural figures around the artists Ferdinand Kitt (1887–1961) and Franz Zülow, with up to 27 artists staying at the farmhouse near St Gilgen in the summer seasons, until 1938.[38] The colony comprised a range of artists from different generations, and even though many were connected with Vienna's Academy of Applied Arts, they represented a diverse body of work in medium and artistic styles. Significantly, the group also encompassed figures with diverging political views and included monarchists, national socialists as well as communists, with right-wing conservatives such as Poldi Wojtek and art historian Kajetan Mühlmann, who facilitated summer exhibitions for the group at Galerie Welz in Salzburg, brushing shoulders with young progressive Jewish artists such as Lisel Salzer (1906–2005) and Lisl Weil.[39] In his report on the colony in August 1932, art historian Wolfgang Born emphasised the communal nature and artistic exchange as the defining elements at Zinkenbach, presenting them as 'a new school of Austrian art, down-to-earth yet far from provincial'.[40] While this 'new school' by and large was restricted to landscape painting, portraiture, and impressions of the Salzkammergut, the social life of the colony included several joint artistic projects, such as painting competitions and humorous albums that give insight into the group's activities.[41]

In 1932, Kitt documented the communal spirit of the 'painting boat' in a colourful watercolour sketch (Figure 3.3), showing his wife Maria Kitt at the helm, accompanied by Ernst August von Mandelsloh (1886–1962), Louise Merkel-Romée (1888–1977), Georg Merkel (1881–1976), Bettina Bauer-Ehrlich (1903–1985), Georg Ehrlich (1897–1966), Ernst Huber (1895–1960), Kitt, and Zülow. Finished in a short-hand style, the image characterises each artist in caricature portraits, spending their day at the easel on the bright blue Lake Wolfgang, with an old lighthouse in the background. In its simplicity, the image marks a decidedly freer and more experimental artistic approach than the 'expressionist landscapes, still lives, and portraits, which defined the *exhibited* work of most group members'.[42] The atmosphere of the summer colony thus clearly encouraged creative experimentation, encapsulating the lightness of the summer holiday. Nowhere is this more visible than in the so-called *Blödelalbum* (the silly album), which Maria and Ferdinand Kitt started in 1932 as an artistic chronicle of holidays in the Salzkammergut, soon encompassing contributions by different artists from the group. Works in the album included sketches as well as overpainted postcards, such as Kitt's *Swans in the Orient* or Zülow's *St Wolfgang in the tropical heat*. Appropriating touristic souvenirs, the drawings changed the rural Austrian landscape into an exoticised place of exploration. The reimagination of Lake Wolfgang as a tropical paradise manifested the region as a leisurely

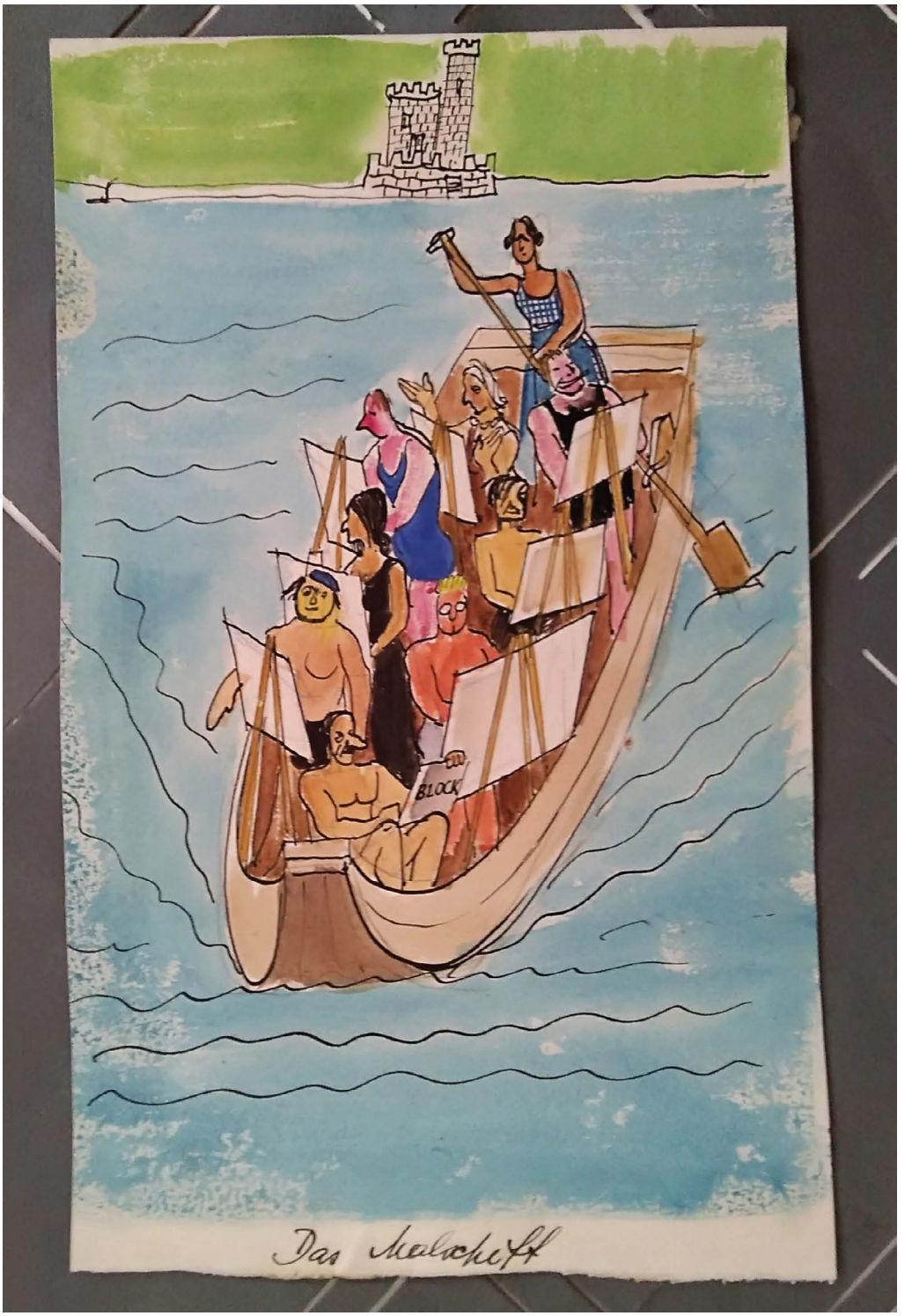

Figure 3.3 Ferdinand Kitt. *Das Malschiff*, 1932. © Estate of Ferdinand Kitt.

place of adventure in the artistic imagination, forging a distinction between a local 'exotic' environment and the urban visitors. In this way, and despite the artists' long-term stays in the region, emphasis was continually placed on the difference between the urban visitors and the local landscape and people. Together, they constructed a similar amalgamation of the 'modern' and the 'traditional' as in official tourism posters; however, this was realised in decidedly more playful terms than through the channels of official advertising – not only in artist albums but also on a much bigger scale.

In 1933, Gertrude Schwarz-Helberger (1894–1991), a trained concert pianist and autodidact painter who spent several summers with the colony in the 1930s, painted *The Drunk Landscape*, which was exhibited at the Beautiful Wall exhibition in 1933, organised by the Viennese feminist artists' Association *Wiener Frauenkunst*.[43] Shown in a section for bar decoration, *The Drunk Landscape* was made for an urban setting yet focused on holiday-making by Lake Wolfgang. The lake is set at the image centre, surrounded by busy scenery in a collapsed perspective, including dinner parties, dances, and rural labour. The pictorial language is pronouncedly naïve, merging exoticised villages and plant life with doll-like figures in bright colours. Towards the edge of the lake, a small boat recalls the *Malschiff*. Contrasting the easily comprehensible messaging of tourism posters such as Binder's, *The Drunk Landscape* is chaotic. Its busy lifeworld makes the Salzkammergut not a serene place of recovery but a location of social gatherings, dancing, drinking, and play. Even compared to Walde's paintings of high-society events, *The Drunk Landscape* is much less 'serious' in form and in content, emphasising a disinhibited stay. With the purpose of decorating the walls of a place of social entertainment, the painting accentuates a louder, more dynamic side of holidays in the countryside. The painting also recalls descriptions by the writer Hilde Spiel, a regular visitor in the Salzkammergut and member of the Zinkenbach artists' colony, who described her generation's perception of interwar Austria as 'young and fresh, and in no way doomed'.[44] In her semi-biographical book *Confusion at the Wolfgangsee* (1935), Spiel not only sketched the rich social life of the *Sommerfrische* months but also pointed towards the generational differences and diverging approaches to rural themes that a younger generation of artists developed in comparison to their older and more established counterparts. In Spiel's book, the Belgian tourist Pierre suggests tongue-in-cheek to his summer fling Theres (modelled on Spiel's friend, the painter Lisel Salzer) that young artists should leave 'the towers and the mountains for the old ones' and 'paint other things'.[45] While Spiel's account is a fictionalised record of her summers by Lake Wolfgang, it points towards the different generations that met at the Zinkenbach – and their different outlooks. Presenting artist colonies as places of sociability, Spiel's comment draws attention to a body of work that significantly differed from the landscape and genre paintings strongly associated with artist colonies since the nineteenth century. Women artists such as Salzer, Weil, and Schwarz-Helberg, formulated an image of the countryside that emphasised conviviality, fun and pleasure, emphasising a cosmopolitan lifestyle that stood at the core of their experiences of the countryside and circulated widely among the popular channels of their social circles.

Greetings from the countryside! Folk fashion and New Women

Along with a commercialisation of modern femininity, the illustrated press played a significant role in mediating between new concepts of society, modernist art and design, and mass culture.[46] The construction of rural modernity in fashion was integral to this.

Ethnologist Elsbeth Wallnöfer has emphasised the distinctly urban element that stood at the core of fashion á la Tyrolienne: 'It was the global citizens with their cosmopolite fashion who knew how to make the charms of rural culture socially acceptable'.[47] As a 'symbol of modernity', fashion á la Tyrolienne, such as the dirndl dress, were versatile items, 'rural enough' to display a playful interaction with tradition.[48] Magazines such as *Die Bühne* emphasised the close links between tradition and modernity, presenting the dirndl as an item that simultaneously found attention in Paris and London and offered urban populations the opportunity to engage in rural culture within Austria: 'Fashion and folklore go hand in hand. This is interesting for everyone – even those who make great international fashion and take their inspiration from traditional costumes, and for us Austrians, who increasingly discover our love for the fatherland'.[49] Fashion became a defining element in rural-inspired Austrian modernity.[50] As an instance of 'banal nationalism', in which everyday material culture becomes a part of small-gestured nationalist sentiment, it simultaneously represented the growing international popularity of Austrian culture and could be integrated into narratives of 'modern tradition' that stood at the core of the Austrofascist regime.[51] Yet at the hands of female artists and designers, folk fashion did not simply tie in with Austrian nationalism and the growing tourist industry. In combination with the image of the modern women, it offered a distinctly cosmopolitan flavour. Contrary to the positioning of folk dress in line with a traditionalist, reactionary culture, illustrated magazines thus transformed folk fashion into a short-hand style for Austria with international appeal. *Vogue*, for example, published several features on Austrian fashion from the early 1930s until 1938, celebrating 'the simple, infinitely charming Austrian manner of living' in a juxtaposition between folk festivals and fashion shoots of women wearing Austrian-inspired clothing.[52] Upon arriving in Salzburg, a 1933 article states, international cosmopolites 'take off their Mainbochers and Augustabernards and put on a cotton *dirndl* dress and rakish Tyrolian felt hat with a feather (bought at Lanz in Salzburg, probably)'.[53] By the 1930s, Austrian fashion had clearly become part and parcel of the international lifestyle of the jet set, and women artists played a leading role in its consolidation.

Die Bühne was one of the leading outlets to promote the countryside as a place of leisure in a fashionable manner. Though strictly speaking a theatre magazine, it included contributions on a wide range of subjects and, in line with its many contributions by well-known artists and writers, can be identified as a 'smart magazine', which was directed at cosmopolitan readers who engaged in high and popular culture alike.[54] The magazine employed many young women artists, designers and writers from the mid-1920s onwards, many of whom were still students at the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna or recent graduates.[55] In their playful approach, these artists also constructed a new imagery of the countryside as a leisure place, spreading widely through the magazine pages. Despite their different approach to the countryside compared to official tourist advertising, *Die Bühne* built on a similar framework, with the modern woman as the 'urban component'. Rather than replicating the male gaze of tourism posters, their images often showed the countryside as a place of leisure from a young woman's perspective. On the move, well-dressed and confident, the image of womanhood in this context represents a specific 'type' that became a central point of focus in the interwar illustrated press and advertising culture: the New Woman, a central indicator of modernity in visual culture.[56] While with the rise of the Austrofascist regime a reversal to traditional gender roles took afoot with restrictive policies for women, such as the 'Doppelverdiener-Ordnung' ('double-income-act') that aimed at barring women's participation from public life, the artists contributing to *Die Bühne* continued to build an imagery in which the modern woman stood in focus.[57]

Countering the rhetoric built by popular reactionary figures such as Luis Trenker or the writer Guido Zernatto, one of the leading ideologues of the regime who called for a return to the 'soil' and traditional lifestyles, *Die Bühne*'s continued to modernise an image of the countryside with the independent modern woman as a central feature.[58] The main contrast to the innocent girl in the countryside or the hardworking farmer's wife, who featured as the official ideal woman promoted after 1933, was that the New Woman was essentially an urban persona who spent time in the countryside. In other words, the social and class divide that rural-urban binaries were built on was hardly disrupted by the presence of the New Woman in rural settings. Still, her popularity shows that despite the ideological rifts rhetorically manifested between city and countryside, its borders were much more fluid than has long been acknowledged.[59] Based on its longstanding role as places for a summer escape, Salzburg and the Salzkammergut were, thus, transformed into a place where modernity and tradition were combined to present rural modernity in the Austrian provinces, with the modern woman as the defining figure, both as a subject and as a creator.

Three young artists stand out here, whose contributions to the magazine in the early stages of their career led to numerous successful commissions in Austria and abroad: Paula Keller, Erni Kniepert, and Lisl Weil, a regular visitor to the Zinkenbach artists' colony in the 1930s. Together, they exemplify how rural modernity was visualised with the contribution of women artists and designers who steadily moved between city and countryside and modelled an image in which fashion and the image of the New Woman transformed the countryside into an escape for the modern woman. Their contributions also highlight that modern femininity in the countryside was not bound by specific political ideology. While Keller had a successful career in Berlin during the Second World War, Kniepert cooperated with the Austrofascist regime. Weil, meanwhile, was of Jewish origin and thus forced to flee Austria in 1938. One of her first points of employment in New York was at Lanz Trachten, originally a Salzburg company, which specialised in rural-inspired Austrian fashion and began to operate branches in New York and Los Angeles in the early 1930s.[60] The modern countryside that these women constructed in their work was, thus, part of a broader trend that was independent of political orientation at the time.

In the first September issue of 1934 (Figure 3.4), the cover of *Die Bühne* shows a postcard of green alpine pastures, with 'Greetings from the countryside! E' in cursive handwriting written across. In the background is a pencil drawing of a city in muted grey tones. The collage style of the design evokes a simple contrast between a colourful, blissful life in the countryside against the dull grey of the metropolis, consisting of rows of houses with smoking chimneys, a busy street, and a sidewalk with miniature stick figures. Though the visual language of both aspects of the image is also simplified and naïve, the postcard promises a pastoral escape to a place with simple wooden huts and cattle roaming freely in alpine pastures. Since the rural image is a postcard, it also connects the city and countryside by being sent from one location to another: the city represents the dreary every day, the countryside an idyllic escape.

This contrast is further elaborated in a two-page spread within the publication, which adopts the same collage format under 'Postcards and reality'.[61] Here, the whole image is monochromatic, merging realistic postcards with simple drawings, which illustrate 'reality' versus the messages shown on the postcards in a humorous interplay between the two. To the far left, one card, sent between friends, reads, 'Dear friend, I am living in a very nice villa here, with a wonderful view. Affectionately, Lia'.[62] Half covered by the postcard, an illustration shows a rundown farmhouse with an outdoor lavatory and a woman stretching her head outside a small window in the roof.

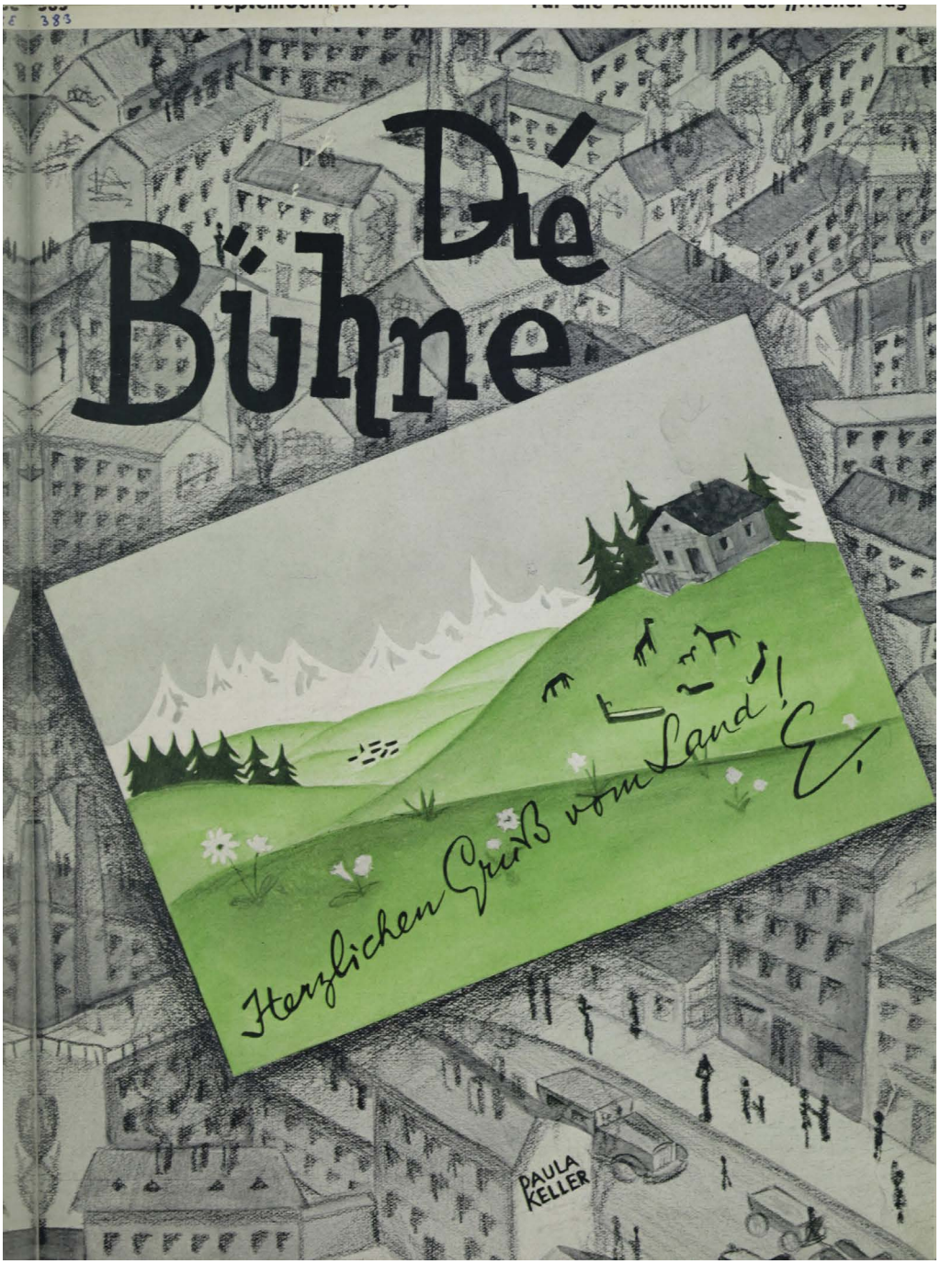

Figure 3.4 Paula Keller. 'Herzlichen Gruß vom Land!' *Die Bühne* 383 (1934), cover. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

Below is a message from a wife, 'Dear husband, since it is so wonderful here, I would like to stay for another few weeks. With kisses, your Elfi'.[63] Next to this card, a couple in folk costumes hug and kiss in the rural landscape. On the second page, similar contradictory messages of holidaymakers writing to friends, lovers and family in Vienna are juxtaposed with drawings of a beer-fuelled folk evening, an afternoon playing cards and a ball where a man has two women in his arms. Based on the stamps affixed on the postcards, all are written from the Austrian countryside, which the illustrations describe at once as wholly traditional and backwards while also serving as a location for promiscuity, games, and evening entertainment. In other words, the countryside is portrayed as an escape and the natural scenery and encounters with rural life appear secondary to its portrayal as affordable and entertaining, away from the constraints of society's convention. The magazine cover and 'Postcards and reality' present the countryside as a fun-loving holiday escape, in which the 'rural' hardly signals a return to tradition but to a free, uninhibited life, recalling Schwarz-Helberger's *The Drunken Landscape*. This image, symptomatic of the presentation of the countryside for a younger generation of holidaymakers, was forged by someone of precisely that generation: Paula Keller.

Keller began to study at Vienna's Academy of Graphic Arts in 1928 before taking ceramics classes at the Academy of Applied Arts, as well as studying painting with Josef Dobrowsky (1889–1964), a member of the Zinkenbach painters' colony. From 1931 onwards, Keller regularly contributed cover designs and illustrations to *Die Bühne* while also working for the Viennese advertising agency Werbe-Mendel, where she designed posters for companies such as the Swiss beverage company Ovomaltine and Viennese fashion houses.[64] Her contributions to *Die Bühne* apply the same flat surfaces and playful, bright visual language as her poster designs, which helped to modernise the image of the countryside on the magazine's pages. In *Die Bühne*'s September 1934 issue, Keller's rendering of rural Austria sets the tone for the publication overall. It integrates the countryside into an image of fashionable holiday destinations for an urban readership. Drawing a connection between simple rural life and happiness, placed alongside other happy holiday memories and snapshots, photographs such as Trude Fleischmann's image of a woman and young girl in front of a simple barn and vegetable garden present the Austrian countryside as a place of rejuvenation through simple bliss. 'We are fully countrified here – meaning wholly happy'.[65] On the opposite page, an elegant woman in a white jumpsuit, wearing a pearl necklace, bends over to pet a cow, her fashionability awkwardly contrasting the rural setting. Throughout, images show the countryside as it is seen through the eyes of an urban holidaymaker. The holiday is the defining framework, emphasising that there is no serious attempt to understand or to engage with rural life sincerely. That being 'countrified' concerning the simple set-up, without electricity or running water, did not mean 'wholly happy' for the people who permanently lived in the countryside is of no relevance: the tourist gaze transformed the rural experience into a landscape of pleasure, removed some steps from reality. At the same time, it was hardly forgotten that one of the most important advantages of the Salzkammergut was its proximity to Salzburg, where the Salzburg Festival took place in the summer months. By extension, the nearby lake district represented the rural 'background' to this cultural event, allowing a presentation of Austria as a primary place for music and theatre, all set in proximity to an enticing landscape and folk traditions.

In the summer of 1934, *Die Bühne* published a special issue on the occasion of the Salzburg Festival, which not only discussed different aspects of the festival but also

formulated a clear vision of the cosmopolitan nationalism described by Michael P Steinberg, elaborated in the first chapter of this book, through a combined vision of the festival, cosmopolitan visitors, and the surrounding countryside.[66] On the cover, a photograph shows three women in traditional folk dress leaving the famous Mirabell Gardens, the Festung Hohensalzburg landmark towering far back. Framed with a bright yellow background and a simple serif font, the cover merges modern page design with a photograph emphasising Salzburg's roots in folk culture and Baroque traditions. Inside the issue, reports and interviews with cultural figures give a unique insight into the festival's productions, intersected by large-scale advertisements for cosmetics and women's fashion. Throughout the magazine, women are not only readers but also consumers. In the central part of the issue, photo essays replace the longer articles from preceding pages. Here, the focus shifts towards the women who add a twist of modernity and glamour to the setting of Salzburg and its rural surroundings (Figure 3.5). Titled 'Journey to Salzburg and Arrival', 'Happy Sommerfrische in Salzburg and surroundings' and, some pages further, 'Fashion á la Salzburg', these sections are as modern as they emphasise a ruralised lifestyle. In 'Journey to Salzburg and Arrival', two photographs by Otto Skall (1884–1942) and a drawing by Kniepert trace how modernity and tradition meet in Salzburg.[67] Skall's first photograph shows an unknown young woman in a train compartment, dressed in a simple skirt and sweater, a camera around her neck. She is leaning against the door of her compartment and looks outside the window, sunlight falling in. The caption below, 'London-Salzburg', affirms the image of a modern young woman taking it upon herself to travel across Europe to visit the festival. With no other person visible, the woman appears to be an independent female traveller on a long journey as an eponymous image of modern womanhood. The second photograph shows quite a different image of women travelling to the festival: captioned 'Gnigl-Salzburg', a group in lavish folk costume huddles outside a building in a busy scene. Contrasting the sober, rationalised style of dress of the woman travelling on the train, the embroidery, lace, sequins and heavy, patterned fabric of their dresses, scarves and hats correlate with the entire image composition, which is closely cropped to appear more crowded, while picturing the women in full-length to draw attention to their elaborate dresses. In composition as in content, the two images juxtapose the arrivals to the festival from London and from Gnigl (a small town north of Salzburg, which became a part of the city's municipality in 1935) as a world of contrasts: one, the cosmopolitan modernity of the young, slim female solo traveller, the other the folkloric tradition of well-nourished, jolly rural women taking a memorable trip. Through the simple contrasting of images (much like the strategy used in Keller's holiday postcards double-spread), it is, therefore, visualised clearly that the modern woman is living in a wholly different environment than the rural women.

While the two remain separate in the photographs, they clash in Kniepert's small drawing. The image shows a couple in folk costume on Salzburg's Residenzplatz, with historic buildings framing the scene. As the couple strolls arm in arm, they are photographed by two women with small, hand-held cameras. They also wear clothes that include elements of folk costume, modernised as part of a chic costume with a fitted skirt and jacket and a traditional hat. In these costumes, as in their wearer's interest in Salzburg and folklore couple, modernity and tradition merge on the city's street and show an ideal symbiosis between urban and rural elements. The primary carrier of this idea is women's fashion, executed by an artist and designer specialising in folk dress.[68] Kniepert studied fashion and dress design at Vienna's *Frauenakademie* ('Women's Academy') in Vienna and, like Keller, began to work

Figure 3.5 'Fahrt nach Salzburg und Ankunft', *Die Bühne* 381 (1934), 28. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

for *Die Bühne* as an illustrator while still a student. She designed costumes for the Viennese State Opera and the expressionist dancer Gertrud Krauss from 1934 onwards and, in 1937, began working as the costume designer for Vienna's *Volksoper* ('people's opera'), followed by two years' work in Hollywood for Metro Goldwyn Meyer.[69] By that time, the artist had specialised in folk dress, which she also used to present herself as modern yet thoroughly in tune with folk culture. In an interview anticipating her career in Hollywood, the journalist Annemarie Selinko – another young contributor to the magazine – reports in *Die Bühne*: 'And then she puts on her Dirndl, we ask her to, she looks wonderful in her Dirndl, incredibly Austrian, this Miss Erni, Made in Austria'.[70] *Die Bühne* was where Kniepert explored the interplay between modernity and rural life, designing covers and numerous smaller illustrations accompanying photo essays and articles. Through Kniepert's cover designs, which she started to create in the late 1920s, *Die Bühne*'s presentation was modernised with illustrations of slender, modern women and geometrical patterns. Kniepert also published illustrations and essays, focusing on modern women learning professions, practising sports, or socialising with friends.[71] Integrating urban glamour and rural scenes, her contributions were instructive both to its modernisation and its transition towards the presentation of Austria as alpine but fashionable and modern. Known for her detailed knowledge of folk costume and her talent in converting this to the needs of the stage, Kniepert was an artist who closely dealt with adapting tradition for modern markets. Her drawings for the August 1934 special issue, in this light, combine the two different worlds from Skall's photograph, which meet in Salzburg. They also set the tone for the following pages, where a modern 'folk femininity' becomes the defining element, expressed through an interplay between illustrations and photographs.

'Happy summer guests in the Salzburg region' shows a small drawing by Kniepert and photographs by Rudolf Schloß and Fleischmann, widely known for her glamorous studio work and experimental dance photography.[72] Again, the contrast between tradition and modernity is combined in the figure of the fashionable young woman. This time, she is represented by society lady Baroness Christl Fries, riding a bike on holiday in St Gilgen in a simple dirndl and cardigan, and a dancer of the Viennese state opera ballet, Liesl Handl, in a folk-inspired hat, standing in front of Salzburg's famous Café Bazar. As the different locations underline, the *Sommerfrische* extended much beyond Salzburg and meant greater mobility within the Salzkammergut region: popular locations along Lakes Wolfgang, Mondsee and Attersee were where cosmopolites could easily engage and play with elements of folk culture of their choice. The photograph on the opposite page emphasises that this was different from local life in the countryside. Here, again, local women in folk costumes walk in groups as part of a bigger collective, their ornamented dresses looking heavy and stuffy compared to the portraits of the young modern women as individuals in adapted, folk-inspired fashion. This model of referencing and modernisation is repeated across the pages of *Die Bühne*, drawing an intricate link between holidaymaking, folk culture, Salzburg, and the Salzkammergut, all combined in the presentation of young fashionable woman in folk-inspired dress.

The dirndl dress was the most prominent item to signal this in relation to the modern woman. By the 1930s, fashion á la Tyrolienne had reached modern audiences far and beyond.[73] In Austria, this international popularity was, in turn, presented as an 'Austrian triumph', signalling proof that there was a space for Austrian folklore tradition in modern times. Again, the contemporary fashioning of this trend often lay in women's hands. In a two-page spread in *Die Bühne* in 1933, drawings by fashion illustrator and

journalist Elly Sigmund(-Petter) illustrate the 'triumph of Austrian motifs'.[74] As slender female types present different outfits, the Dirndl, the folk cardigan and modern adaptations of folk-inspired suits are seamlessly integrated with tennis costumes and evening dresses, tying the rural references contained in folk fashion to the cosmopolitan lifestyle of its wearers – not without a note at the bottom, however, stating: 'Where would the dirndl be more beautiful and in its place than in the Austrian *Sommerfrische!*'[75] The close ties to the dress's rural origins are, thus, consistently reiterated while simultaneously presenting it as a marker of cosmopolitan, modern femininity.

This identification is taken even further in a humorous feature by Lisl Weil, who started to contribute to *Die Bühne* in her late teenage years, danced, designed costumes, and studied at the Academy of Applied Arts.[76] Her contributions to *Die Bühne* coincide with Kniepert's and fall within the time she spent her summers in the Salzkammergut. In 1937, Weil published 'Interview with a Dirndl dress'.[77] Written and illustrated by the artist, simple, delicate line drawings of folk fashion and accessories, as well as some shorthand figure portraits, circle a text, in which a dirndl in a Salzburg shop window muses about her importance in modern fashion. 'Playing farmer's wife and farmer is "le plus chic" at the moment!'[78] The dirndl's contemplations from her shop window are studded with words in English, forging a playful and modern form of expression that emphasises its fashionability. Telling readers about potential French and Japanese customers, it wishes to be bought by an Englishwoman: while it is born in Salzburg, it feels at home in the world. Weil's text and illustration intertwine urban and rural elements on the page, constructing Austrian folklore as an intrinsic part of modern culture and indicating a new strategy of Austrian rural modernity, which promised the international circulation of its image as an alpine dreamland: folk-inspired fashion and accessories. Aside from Austrian-style dresses, this even included products such as hay-scented perfume in a flask topped by a miniature Tyrolean hat, for example, presented in a box decorated with different motifs from alpine flora and fauna and dancing couples in folk dress.[79] Developed by the Viennese perfume studio Schick, such experimental designs highlight how the 'scent of the Alps' had truly arrived in the metropolis.[80] Yet rather than reflecting the 'whiff of conservative politics' that journalist Anton Kuh warned of with this phrase, products such as *Alpine Hay* and *Alpine Roses* show that, by the 1930s, Austrian rural modernity had gone much beyond touristic kitsch: as part of an 'ethno-fashion' trend, coinciding with numerous features of folklore dress in magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue,* it had become high fashion.[81] As Weil's drawing visualises the dirndl, it is transformed into a playful modern object whose rural appearance betrays a thoroughly modern outlook. Beyond the simple promotion of a national item of clothing gone cosmopolitan, fashion á la Tyrolienne stood for a modern femininity, which contradicted the restrictive gender and class politics of the Austrofascist regime and, especially at the hands of progressive women designers, came to represent an internationally appealing product of rural modernity.[82]

Tourism and Austria's contradictory modernities

By the mid-1930s, Austrian rural modernity had long expanded from souvenir and craft production to fashion and interior design. Beyond the circulation of locally produced objects, this trend even took on a physical presence abroad, illustrated by Wilhelm Kaufmann's (1895–1975) wall paintings at the Studio Viennois, for example, an Austrian café and design store in Paris, designed by Gabriel Guévrékian (1892–1970). Dominated by a playful alpine landscape in bright colours – not unlike Schwarz-Helberger's *Drunk Landscape* – the painting stretched the walls of the café area, interspersed with miniature

figures in folk dress, dancing, hunting, or working in the fields. Described by Kaufmann himself as a 'joyful representation of life in Austria', the painting offered an idealised and picturesque version of the country in central Paris, decorating the otherwise modernist interior of the café, defined by serving carts made from glass and steel, and simple wooden furniture.[83] Bridging the gap between tradition and modernity in this way, Kaufmann's designs, much like fashion á la Tyrolienne, indicate how rural modernity strengthened the connection between Austrian traditions and modern culture beyond a conservative political environment and connected the Alps with a cosmopolitan marketplace.[84]

In various fields of art and design, references to rural culture became a fixture of Austria's presentation at home and abroad, supported through official channels yet also developing independently through the involvement of various artists and designers. By extension, the different models of rural modernism introduced in this chapter offered insight into a time when tradition, regionalism and modernity represented the central paradox of Austrian culture overall. They show that the rural culture that became such a central aspect of Austrian state ideology in Austrofascism could not simply be joined under the umbrella term of state-supported 'reactionary modernism'.[85] Channelled through different facets of Austrian art, design and popular visual culture, rural modernism instead transpired as a complex of other elements that uniquely disseminated modern Austrian rural culture as a highly visible phenomenon in which modernity and tradition became complementary elements.[86]

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4 Rural Utopia

Heimat Photography between Popular Nationalism and Modernist Experimentation

No discussion of modernism beyond the metropolis would be complete without mention of *Heimat* photography. It was the most popular form of experimentation with rural themes, yet also the one which seemed the most removed from modern life in terms of its content. By relying on modern technology to create archaic, idealised views, *Heimat* photography embodied the contradictions that a description of 'modern art and the countryside' seems to signal. One of the best definitions of the genre's ambiguities can be borrowed from a wholly different geographical context, Esther Gabara's discussion of modernist photography in Mexico and Brazil: 'strangely rural for the urban New Vision, diminutive compared to Constructivism's monumentalism, more populated than the stark New Vision, melodramatically kitsch as much as avant-garde, and documentary without satisfying the progressivist desires of that reformist mode'.[1] Gabara uses the concept of errancy as a means to circumvent the dynamics of the (European) centre and (Latin American) periphery, in which modernist movements in the latter are judged by their originality or their 'submission of influence' to European centres of the avant-garde.[2] Errancy, instead, 'begins by tracking the movement and disruptions of these key ideas out of place'.[3] Gabara argues against interpretations of modernism as a universalising process and considers 'errant modernism' as a means to reassess artistic developments with a strong local focus in the dyad between 'politicised nationalism and aestheticised cosmopolitanism'.[4] Although Gabara's focus on Latin American modernism has a wholly different geopolitical context than *Heimat* photography in Central Europe, her approach offers a valuable impetus to critically reassess a genre which, for a long time, has evaded analysis as a kitschy, reactionary form of photography. At first sight, *Heimat* photography indeed appears to have had little in common with the modernist experimentation taking place in central European photography at the same time. Nonetheless, it forged 'new relationships' between people and their environment through technological reproduction, which was a crucial definition of modernist photography in line with modern mass culture and technical progress.[5] The avant-garde artist László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946) referred New Vision photography as 'dispassionate forms of observation that were expressed in a realist or harshly veristic mode of representation'.[6] To a certain extent, this approach became just as relevant to *Heimat* photography as a popular genre with aestheticised documentary aspirations. This chapter, therefore, proposes a reassessment of *Heimat* photography within a broader artistic and political context. Related to the circulation of rural modernism within popular culture, discussed in the previous chapter, it considers *Heimat* photography as a genre that encompassed both the activities of amateur movements and artists and highlights the international connections to which

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-5

this prevalent form of rural visual culture was linked. Ultimately, the chapter argues that perspectives on *Heimat* photography as a form of popular nationalism within German-speaking contexts alone do not account for its broader significance as a variant of modern photography in Central Europe.

Heimat as a countryside ideal

Heimat photography was a widespread phenomenon across 1930s Central Europe. Yet it has almost exclusively been assessed in the context of reactionary modernism in 1930s Austria and Germany.[7] Its origins can be found in the romanticising idea of *Heimat*, which first emerged in nineteenth-century Germany as a reaction to concerns about the detrimental effects on society and traditional culture by modernity and industrialisation.[8] By the beginning of the twentieth century, *Heimat* had become 'a cultural trope, a container of history, a symbolic representation, and an element in the constitution of identity', tied to the idealised memory of an intrinsically 'known' and never changing subjective place of (national) origin.[9] In spatial terms, this *Heimat* ideal was irreverently placed in the countryside, represented by the natural landscape and rural communities. The search for this safe, native place quickly related to a regressive conservatism, according to which homeland was defined in nationalist, patriarchal terms. Yet *Heimat*, its cultural representation, and its functions were more wide-ranging than such an exclusive vision would allow.[10] Indeed, the parameters of *Heimat* did not remain exclusive to the German cultural context but led to competing definitions by other nations living in a shared cultural space. Vilém Flusser, for example, has argued that the Czech *Domov* bore the same connotations as *Heimat*.[11] It gained particular currency during the Czech National Awakening in the nineteenth century and was constructed as a direct reaction to the growing ideals of *Heimat* in German Romanticism.[12] Thus, despite its apparent exclusivity to German culture, the *Heimat* ideal carried similar connotations among national groups in Central Europe from the nineteenth century onwards and built on related ideological origins. As will be shown, this understanding also led to a shared interest in rural photography across the region.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, *Heimat* also became connected to preservationist aims as a foundation for movements such as the *Heimatschutzbewegung*, the movement for protecting the homeland. Originating in Germany in the late nineteenth century, this was formalised in Austria with organisations such as the *Verein für Denkmalpflege und Heimatschutz* ('Society for Heritage and Homeland Protection'), founded in 1911. Movements for heritage protection were concerned with the loss of traditional culture through modernisation and, encompassing a broad political spectrum between 'liberal conservatism and *völkisch* reactionism', supported the preservation of nature, folk culture, and historical monuments, both in the countryside and in the city.[13] As a part of these preservationist goals, photography became an essential scientific tool through which landmarks, traditions, and costumes were documented in their ideal form. Mediating between the past and the present and with clear scientific directives, the origins of *Heimat* photography lasted well into the late 1920s. Indeed, as late as 1928, Kurt Raphael argued in the German amateur photography magazine *Photofreund* that *Heimat* photography should be a 'typical, realistic and objective pictorial depiction of geographic, architectural, ethnographic and other cultural landmarks'.[14] However, parallel to Austria's transitioning into a reactionary, Catholic state in the 1930s, there was a shift in focus in Austrian *Heimat* photography compared to its German variant and the

genre was understood more closely in pictorialist terms.[15] Setting focus to the Central European space specifically, parallels between Austrian *Heimat* photography and similar developments in Czechoslovakia show that the genre not only represented an exercise of the aestheticisation of nationalised rural scenes. Its political implications were not always as clear cut as a focus on reactionary ideologies alone can reveal, not least through its involvement of amateur photographers. The tensions between amateurs and artists who produced *Heimat* photographs and questions about the 'right' kind of images became a present feature in visual culture, which gave a high level of visibility to rural areas within modern life. Yet it was unclear what these images should look like, or what precisely they should record.

Amateur photography and 'beautiful' picture-taking

Amateur photography found its entry into Viennese society in the late nineteenth century. The *Wiener Kamera Klub* ('Vienna Camera Club') counted over 200 members when founded in 1891 and became an essential centre for pictorialist photography. Figures such as Hugo Henneberg (1963–1918), Heinrich Kühn (1866–1944), and Hans Watzek (1848–1903) widely showed their work under the name of *Trifolium*, with exhibitions in New York, Paris, and London and an international network that connected the *Kamera Klub* to renowned international photographers such as Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946).[16] In this context, the definition of an 'amateur photographer' primarily referred to someone who focused on photography as an art form and practised it non-commercially. Even photographers who had taken a professional apprenticeship but ultimately focused on non-commercial work, such as Moriz Nähr (1859–1945), thus counted as amateurs. Nähr specialised in pictorialist landscapes and street views, emphasising texture and composition. Carefully retouched after development in a painstaking process, such images preferred beautiful creative outcomes to a realistic approach. Together with August Stauda (1861–1928), Nähr represented one of the defining figures of so-called *Alt Wien* ('old Vienna') photography, which mediated between nostalgic views and the aim to document the fading historic city.[17] This also included portraits of nostalgic people 'types', such as market women, street cleaners and newspaper vendors, focusing on specific professions and marginalised groups and widely circulating on postcards under the heading 'Viennese types'.[18] Even though *Alt Wien* photography concentrated on capturing vanishing aspects of Vienna, it shared many of the characteristics that rural *Heimat* photography became associated with just a few decades later. Pictorialist photography in this context was a vital medium because it offered 'beautiful' yet realistic views, which also had widespread appeal.

Going hand in hand with the growing availability of affordable cameras in the late 1920s, *Heimat* photography developed as a phenomenon among professional photographers but also had a strong basis in amateur photography movements, which grew in number at approximately the same time.[19] The genre gained increasing attention in Austrian amateur photography magazines such as *Kamera-Kunst* and *Photo-Sport*. Advice articles and essays ranged from technical specifications, such as which lenses to use, which quality paper to print images on or which cameras were most useful for trips to the countryside, to formal instructions on motif choice and suggestions for practising at home when travel was impossible.[20] Within these wide-ranging discussions, the articles reveal that amateur photographers predominantly lived in urban areas, were middle-class, and practised *Heimat* photography on holiday. In order to support this, magazines

published photographs by amateurs, organised competitions, and gave practice-based advice on pictures sent in. This also amounted to harsh criticism of how *not* to take *Heimat* photographs, and experienced members of amateur photography clubs, such as Hugo Haluschka (1880–1951), a lawyer in the city of Graz by profession, complained about the flurry of bad images produced.[21]

One of the fundamental issues in finding what 'good' *Heimat* photography ought to look like was its vague definition: '*Heimatphotographie* enforces a consolidation about what the German *Volk* has achieved across the centuries. From this consolidation, pride and love of the *Heimat* will grow by itself. The joy in the beauty of the *Heimat* will be awakened'.[22] On the one hand, such descriptions maintained that documenting heritage sites and folk traditions was a significant feature. On the other hand, the idea of a national place of belonging was vague in its emphasis on easily comprehensible values that could be *felt* through engagement with the homeland. Motif choice was, thus, key. Yet to complicate things further, it was not only archaic rural scenes and local traditions that advice articles deemed appropriate but also aspects of modern life in the countryside, such as funiculars, water reservoirs, and hotel buildings. *Heimat* photography ideally combined progress and tradition through technical innovations such as modern and more flexible cameras and motif choices. Yet even though articles emphasised that motif choice could – even should – include signs of modernity in the countryside, these only featured rarely in the published work of amateurs.[23] The popular weekly illustrated magazine *Der Weltguck* regularly featured the section 'The reader photographs', for example, which included one photograph submitted to its regular competition and one or two short articles focusing on technical and compositional aspects of photography. Each photograph was accompanied by an image description and title, as well as the name and address of the photographer. In the third January issue of 1934, the winning entry on the topic 'Hidden treasures of Austria' showed an alpine landscape motif from Styria, with the photograph taken from a train in such a way that the lower window edge and the train tracks are visible, the latter cutting into the landscape.[24] The fact that the photographer himself, Othmar Cekal, was Viennese points out that this was an image taken by an urban traveller. The accompanying article celebrates the production of 'lively' images, enabled through small handheld cameras, and points towards the significant difference between photography and its 'big sister, painting': namely, 'the depiction of the real'.[25] Below is a step-by-step guide giving information on photograph composition. The central positioning of the railway tracks in the image, taken from a train, realises the advice to take a 'lively' image and to set structural features in the image centre, ultimately recording the growing accessibility of rural areas within the competition theme 'hidden treasures'. Yet Cekal's inclusion of the train tracks is a notable exception in *Der Weltguck*: as an Innsbruck-published magazine that had close ties to the Christian Social party and, later, the Austrofascist regime, *Der Weltguck* perfected the image of a blissful countryside, in which modern technology and rural landscapes rarely mixed. For that reason alone, amateur photography differed from the images circulating by professionals, making evident the discrepancies between what was expected from Heimat photographs and why amateur photography rarely matched these standards. Despite familiar claims by articles on amateur photography that the Austrian *Heimat* was a place where modernity and tradition symbiotically merged, its preferred mode of representation was rural with a distinctly romanticising point of view. Compared to other photographs printed in the magazine, the difference between professional photographers and amateurs is clear. For example, the cover image of the same issue, showing Innsbruck's main square in the

snow, is a well-composed photograph, in which the Alps towering over the city make for an impressive image. Although published anonymously, it seems clear that it was not taken by an amateur.

In his essay about contemporary amateur photography in the June 1936 issue of *Photo Sport*, Haluschka advises readers to focus on the ordinary rather than trying to emulate artist photographers. He stresses the importance of 'national photography', which he links with the countryside as a place 'where "things are different than at home" and its people, which of course are also different'.[26] Thus, Haluschka constructs the countryside as an essential location for contemporary photography, where 'beautiful' yet documentary aspects could be joined to forge images with ideological value. Haluschka's primary objective was to instil patriotism among the local population, tying photography to the nation-building process.[27] His primary example for this was the artist-photographer Rudolf Koppitz (1884–1936). Simultaneously Haluschka argued against artistic *Heimat* photography for the amateur because it required technical know-how for which they might not have the skills or technical facilities. He described Koppitz's efforts to achieve an ideal composition with the photographer's instructions to villagers to 'put on their old folk costumes. He "composed" them and thus gave us living images, which one seeks in vain in everyday life'.[28] Rather than encouraging amateurs to do the same, Haluschka asked them to consider how they might best emulate their emotional effect: 'Koppitz can allow himself such things; he has great talent and strict training. The ordinary amateur, however, would fail at such an attempt. He would get little pictures that would probably look awful. Whoever is not a director must work differently'.[29] Instead, Haluschka suggested a greater documentary focus, encouraging amateurs to record the 'everyday' in the city and the countryside. *Heimat* photography thus became embedded in a discourse that engaged amateurs in documenting their vision of an Austrian homeland, while giving prominence to selected master photographers that worked in a pictorialist mode of representation.

From pictorialism to the *Heimat* ideal: Experimentation and ideology

Just as the name Alfons Walde, discussed in the previous chapter, was synonymous with the designation of 'snow painter' for his Tyrolean landscapes, Rudolf Koppitz became the leading representative of aestheticised rural photography, who experimented with a range of different practices, which he combined in his *Heimat* photographs. An assessment of his work shows that the pinnacle of *Heimat* photography took a wholly different route than the popular movement it related to, and in doing so, bridged the gap between artistic photography and popular visual culture. It forged a wholesome and coherent image of the countryside overall, which, as is discussed in detail in the following chapter, found little opposition: even opponents to such idealisations, had difficulty in forging counter-images, leading to the fact that, by the 1930s, the Austrian countryside found a remarkably unified visual representation. Like Walde, Koppitz first experimented with turn-of-the-century Secessionist styles before focusing on rural scenes. This trajectory indicates that education in the metropolis was an essential cornerstone for forming a modern visual culture of the countryside. Koppitz exemplifies the fluid process with which Vienna's modern photographers moved between different kinds of photography. Precisely for these neatly constructed, idealising compositions, *Heimat* photography was the opposite of the archaic worlds it imagined: it represented creative experimentation with pseudo-ethnographic tendencies and a commitment to the latest technological

advancements.[30] Contrary to the impression that *Heimat* photography was a static and conservative genre that marked a 'patriotic-conservative turn', Koppitz is a striking example to highlight its complex links to photographic modernity, as his career was defined by a drive for innovation that interacted with the latest trends of the time.[31]

Born in Skrbovice/Schreiberseifen in Silesia, Koppitz first apprenticed in a photography studio in Moravian Brno in 1897 and initially worked for commercial photography studios. Still, his interest in pictorialism soon led him to engage with the artistic photography embraced by Secessionist and Symbolist circles in Vienna.[32] In 1912, he enrolled at the Institute for Teaching and Research in Graphic Arts (the *Graphische*), which he would remain connected to until his early death in 1936. His teacher was the Czech symbolist photographer Karel Novák (1875–1950), who encouraged his students, which also included the symbolist painter and photographer Anton Josef Trčka ('Antios', 1893–1940) and Trude Fleischmann (1895–1990), to develop a lyrical pictorial language in which compositions were to be enhanced through retouching and different development processes. During these early years in Vienna, Koppitz also travelled to remote parts of the Habsburg Empire and northern Germany, where he photographed village life and rural landscapes. Hiking and the outdoors played a vital role in his life and had a decisive impact on the artist's motif choice: from the beginning of his career onwards, the countryside would represent an essential location for his image compositions. Early photographs such as *Dancing Group* (1914) show rural life in reference to folk traditions, with young couples in traditional costumes dancing on a hill under the dramatic sky. Similar images would become motifs in popular illustrated magazines in the 1930s, such as *Der Weltguck*, although their compositions were rarely as accomplished. With symbolic references to rejuvenation, youth and freedom, rendered with softened contours, *Dancing Group* constructs a lyrical, idealised world, which already contains some of the defining features of Koppitz's *Heimat* photography from later years.

After serving as an observational aerial photographer during the First World War, Koppitz became a professor at the *Graphische* in 1919.[33] His appointment brought professional stability, which allowed him to develop a highly recognisable style that modernised pictorialism within the context of post-war Viennese culture. Biographical details show a remarkable drive to update his practice: in the mid-1920s, Koppitz took a further apprenticeship at the photography studio of Arthur Benda (1885–1969) and Madame d'Ora (Dora Kallmus, 1881–1963). Kallmus was one of Vienna's most sought-after photographers, who had portrayed the aristocracy and the cultural elite of Vienna around 1900 before specialising in fashion and dance photography in the 1920s.[34] Moving beyond the soft pictorialism that dominated at the turn of the twentieth century, Kallmus adopted elements of New Vision photography to emphasise textures and clarity in composition, while always showing her sitters in the best possible light. Coinciding with the time of his apprenticeship at Studio d'Ora-Benda, these elements also became central to Koppitz's photographs, giving new dimensions to the symbolic charge of his compositions. Thus, even though Koppitz would come to be known as the photographer of rural themes, his training and interests were deeply grounded in the latest developments in Vienna. Despite the scepticism towards modernist styles that *Heimat* photography often was attached to in advice features for amateurs, the genre's most successful artist was a master of translating modernist styles to rural themes.

Figure 4.1 Rudolf Koppitz. *Movement Study*, 1925. Albertina, Vienna.

Koppitz's work from this time includes *Movement Study* (1925) (Figure 4.1), which continues to be his most recognisable image.[35] The photograph likely portrays dancers from the Russian Issachenko ballet group and fell into a time when Koppitz regularly photographed expressionist dancers at the Vienna studio he shared with his wife Anna Koppitz (1895–1989).[36] Retouched in the darkroom, the image emphasises symbolically charged content through strict composition, mediating between references to turn-of-the-century secessionist imagery and an updated formal approach, which centres on the nude female dancer. In her image analysis, photography historian Monika Faber stresses the slim nude body as a typical symbol of its time, with comparable images including Fleischmann's nude studies of the German dancer Claire Bauroff (1925).[37] Yet while Fleischmann's studies were perceived as scandalous and confiscated on the grounds of indecency when exhibited in Berlin in 1925, *Movement Study* was one of the most sold and popular images of its time.[38] Aside from the gender and antisemitic bias towards the Jewish woman photographer that Magdalena Vukovic has linked to reactions against the Bauroff series, the difference in reception also points towards Koppitz's balancing of artistic photography and popular tastes.[39] Compared to the simplicity of Fleischmann's photographs, which draws all attention to Bauroff's nude body, *Movement Study* integrates the dancer into a poetic, retouched scene. Disrupting radical nudity through the photograph's strict composition, the image's aestheticisation deflects from the potentially risqué subject matter.[40] This approach to the nude is also a significant initial connection point to Koppitz's rural photographs. By the mid-1920s, he increasingly set his studies outside and began to combine them with idealised views of an untouched countryside. Works such as *In the Bosom of Nature* (1923) (Figure 4.2) focused on nude or semi-nude figures in sumptuous rural landscapes, recalibrating the symbolism of dance photography towards ideal bodies and virility in the natural environment.[41] By the mid-1920s, therefore,

Koppitz's photographs on the one hand adopted modernist techniques, and on the other hand took a turn towards the idealisation of the natural landscape. This also cemented his position as a modern national photographer, whose rural-focused work was readily appropriated by the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime and, later, National Socialism. As such, the reception of Koppitz's work readily fell into a category of *Heimat* imagery that sought to employ it in support of ethno-nationalist arguments (Figure 4.3).

One particularly telling example for this is *The Mother* (1925), whose composition illustrates how easily aestheticised photographs could be integrated into radical ideologies. In some sense, *The Mother* is an unconventional family portrait showing Koppitz's wife Anna and their daughter Lotte. Yet none of these personal connections are visible in *The Mother*. Barefoot and dressed in white, Anna becomes a timeless symbolic figure of the joyful, caring and beautiful mother. Set against a blurred background and emphasised by tonal contrasts, it almost seems she was floating. Lotte, meanwhile, plump, tanned and with rounded cheeks, is propped up in her mother's hands as a well-nourished baby, prospering in its mother's care. Even though *The Mother* seems to have little in common with Koppitz's movement studies, it shares some of the defining features of his work: a symbolising composition and a fascination with the 'perfect' human body. It also represents an easily decipherable image of archaic family structures. Yet this façade life quickly crumbles behind the scenes: Anna was a photographer in her own right and acted as Rudolf's darkroom assistant in the studio they led together, founded by her in 1920.[42] While we look at a traditional maternal figure in the photograph, Anna Koppitz was, in fact, her husband's essential collaborator both in front of and behind the camera. It is also thanks to her that the story of *The Mother* does not end in the interwar years. After Austria's annexation to the Third Reich in 1938, she collaborated with the Reich Minister of Nutrition and Agriculture, Richard Walther Darré, who not only requested several of Rudolf

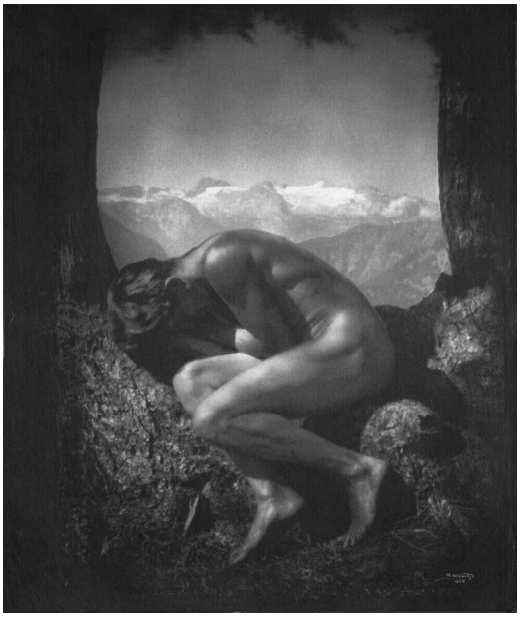


Figure 4.2 Rudolf Koppitz. *In the Bosom of Nature*, 1923. Albertina, Vienna.

Koppitz's works but also commissioned Anna to take photographs at the 'Reichsschule des Reichsnährstandes für Leibesübungen Burg Neuhaus' ('Reich School for Nutrition and Physical Exercise'), where young farmers underwent physical training to become 'racial ideals'.[43] With clean and sharp compositions similar to her husband's, Anna Koppitz visualised the ideal 'Aryan body' for National Socialist propaganda. Meanwhile, the photograph of her and Lotte was to be reworked for a set of stamps. Even though the project never fully came to fruition, the healthy and happy mother and child in *The Mother* thus shows the effortless transitions between symbolist experimentation, *Heimat* photography and Austrofascist and National Socialist ideals, which earned the genre its reputation as a reactionary form of modernism.[44] The extended history of *The Mother* exemplifies how the popularity of Koppitz's work set a standard for artistic rural photography with mass appeal.

By the 1930s, Koppitz spent prolonged periods in the countryside, travelling with his students in the summer and winter to visit remote parts of Austria and neighbouring countries. A favourite location was Tyrol, instigated by Koppitz's colleague at the *Graphische*, Peter Paul Atzwanger (1888–1974).[45] A native of the neighbouring province of Vorarlberg, Atzwanger was a popular *Heimat* photographer in his own right. Throughout the 1920s, he regularly published photographs in illustrated newspapers and magazines specialising in mountaineering and alpine topics.[46] In contrast to Koppitz, whose work transitioned from an urban to a rural focus, Atzwanger had always focused on rural themes, first embracing pictorialism before turning towards a documentary style in the 1920s. Photography historian Elizabeth Cronin has even suggested that Atzwanger's appointment as Professor of Photography at the *Graphische* in 1928 might have motivated Koppitz's turn towards rural subject matter, indicating, once more, that the making of rural images began in the urban space.[47]

Figure 4.3 Rudolf Koppitz. *The Mother*, 1925. Albertina, Vienna.

Koppitz and Atzwanger's work from the 1930s bore a striking resemblance to that of Tyrolean painters such as Walde and Albin Egger-Lienz (1868–1926). For example, Koppitz's *The Sower* (1936) (Figure 4.4) refers directly to a series by Egger-Lienz of the same title, which he painted between 1903 and 1918. *The Sower* shows a man dressed in simple clothing at work in the field. Koppitz emphasised the act of sowing by capturing the flying seeds in a dynamic image composition. As the image is taken from an upward angle, the steep diagonal viewpoint sets the seeds against the clear sky. The farmer is anonymised through the upward angle, so the action rather than the man himself stands in focus, offering a record of traditional farming practices through modernist photographic techniques. In doing so, Koppitz drew a lineage to well-known motifs of rural painting, yet emphasised their contemporaneity through compositions that emphasised the specificities of the photographic medium. Atzwanger, meanwhile, referred to Egger-Lienz's *Lunch* (*The Soup*, 1910) in a photograph showing a farmer's family at noon, published in an alpine special issue of *Die Bühne* in December 1932.[48] Taking the form of (idealised) reportages, Atzwanger's approach to photography emphasised the qualities of the photographic medium through the use of series, which later were published in photo books such as *A Song Sweeps Down from the Mountains* (*Ein Lied rauscht von den Bergen*, 1942) and *Farmers in the Mountains* (*Bauern in den Bergen*, 1944).[49] Thus, in their different forms, Koppitz's and Atzwanger's references to Tyrolean modernism showed striking thematic continuity across genres, drawing on practices that highlighted recent technological and medium-specific developments.

Expanding the rural: *Heimat* photography in an international context

The pinnacle of Koppitz's position as a *Heimat* photographer was in 1936 when the New Austrian Werkbund organised an exhibition of his work at the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry, titled *Land und Leute* ('the country and [its] people'). Comprising approximately 500 photographs, the exhibition showcased Koppitz's productive career and aimed to offer a cross-section of Austria's landscapes and inhabitants. Printed on the invitation for the exhibition, for example, is a close-up portrait of a woman in folk costume with an embroidered blouse and a black headscarf.[50] The image is defined by stark monochromatic contrasts and sharp outlines, emphasised by the shadow

Figure 4.4 Rudolf Koppitz. *The Sower*, 1936. Albertina, Vienna.

of the woman's hand across her face, shielding herself from the sun, and the tracing of fine lines in her tanned face, emphasised further by the blurred landscape in the background. Other images from the exhibition include children in a dark, vernacular parlour, portraits of women in festive costume, and closely cropped tumultuous scenes of folklore festivities. All the photographs stressed high technical perfection and an aestheticisation of rural life.

Although the works on show also included photographs from Koppitz's travels to Hungary, Italy, and Romania, the main emphasis in the popular reception and the exhibition itself lay on the Austrian landscape and people, with a strong focus on the Tyrolean mountain landscape. As the photographer Hans Oplatka emphasised, the exhibition was 'a true creed to Austria'.[51] A reviewer in the newspaper *Die Stunde* even justified the inclusion of geographical areas other than the provinces of the First Republic with the argument that they 'correspond approximately with the reach of the old Austria'.[52] The exhibition thus harboured a vital nationalising element, paired with a dose of Habsburg nostalgia, which was wholly in keeping with the ideals promoted by the Austrofascist regime: similar to the country's presentation in international exhibitions, discussed in the second chapter, Koppitz's work affirmed definitions of Austria as an ideal rural place with a great past that reached beyond the narrow confines of the small postimperial state. The artist himself described the purpose of the exhibition as 'first, to offer a natural and liberated image in nature, second, photography in the service of the homeland and ethnography as well as in the service of tourist advertising, as well as book and newspaper illustration'.[53] By his own definition, therefore, Koppitz's work affirmed a wholesome image of the Austrian countryside that circulated widely in the press, bridging the gap between fine art photography and popular visual culture. Indeed, the Austrian press of the 1930s celebrated Koppitz as someone whose love for his country made his photographs exceptional. As repeatedly emphasised, his compositions had become an ideal version of *Heimat* photography, and the artist was recognised as an unparalleled master of his craft. Oplatka's review notes the presence of one of Plicka's students in the exhibition, for example: 'It was the third day that he spent here, walking through the exhibition halls – he already knew every image by heart. "I always thought I could take photographs, but I see all that I still have to learn", he said'.[54] Another student of Koppitz, the young Czech photographer Jan Lukas (1915–2006), noted in the obituary for his professor, who passed away only a few months after the *Land und Leute* exhibition: 'Whoever studied with him will try to continue on the path he showed us'.[55] Lukas' first solo exhibition, *Země a lidé*, taking place at the Club of Czech Amateur Photographers ('Český klub fotografů amatérů') in Prague in 1940, directly referred to Koppitz's final exhibition at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna in both its title and content, followed by a photo book of the same name in 1946.[56] Given *Heimat* photography as an art of great popular appeal, these direct references in the popular press, emulations, and reports by Koppitz's students went beyond simple teacher-student relationships. They served as best-practice examples on a broader scale.

Lukas's homage to Koppitz indicates how rural photography took a firm hold at the *Graphische* in the 1930s. Indeed, *Země a lidé* might be the most tangible link between Austrian *Heimat* photography and its reverberations in Central Europe, but it was not the only one: Despite the strong patriotic overtones, photographic depictions of 'untouched' countryside and folk traditions that reified a unified national culture were embedded in international exchanges that affirmed photography's position as a medium of modern mass culture. Photography exhibitions by amateur groups show how images of rural areas became embedded in a comparative context, through which each participating state's particularities were affirmed.

In Vienna, numerous such exhibitions took place which, on the one hand, affirmed Austria's specific *Heimat* photography in special sections and, on the other hand, set it in dialogue with work from different countries. Closely following *Land und Leute*, was the *IV. Internationale Photo-Ausstellung* ('Fourth International Exhibition of Photography') at Vienna's Künstlerhaus. Open from 23 May until 30 June 1936 and organised by the *Verband österreichischer Amateurphotographenvereine* ('Association of Austrian Amateur Photography Clubs'), it brought together local and international amateur photographers from over 30 countries, including the United States, China, Romania, Portugal, and Sweden, as well as neighbouring countries such as Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Yugoslavia.[57] The exhibition was split into two sections, with one specifically on Austrian *Heimat* photography that was then exhibited in Salzburg on the occasion of the Salzburg Festival to 'tell of Austria's beauty, traditions, and people'.[58] Yet in Vienna, it seemed more important to draw comparisons to international examples, showing how *Heimat* photography was understood as a wide-ranging movement of rural modernism.

In his discussion of the Vienna exhibition, Haluschka repeatedly stressed the vital contributions by members of Austrian photography clubs and the numerous international submissions to the exhibition committee, which meant that just over 20% of submissions could be accepted.[59] However, despite Haluschka's emphasis on the fact that Austrian amateur photographers could 'compete' with their international colleagues, none of them is mentioned his review. Instead, a few international photographers are introduced by name, including the Czech-German photographer Grete Popper/Markéta Popperová (1896–1976), whose *Moravian Farmer Woman* featured in the exhibition catalogue and in *Photo-Sport*, lauding her 'remarkable' images (Figure 4.5).[60] Next to Hungary, with 69 photographs, the Czechoslovak section was especially strong and counted 43 works, including two by Popper. Considering the works on show, one finds several examples, including *Moravian Farmer Woman*, which might be defined as *Heimat* photographs in different national contexts: focusing on idealised rural labour and people in folk costume, they show a highly romanticised version of life in the countryside. The 'typical' that constituted national and *Heimat* photography for Haluschka thus reflected a broader trend of rural photography, which was highly adaptable across Central Europe.

Popper is an interesting example here. While definitions of *Heimat* photography have tended to emphasise that the ideological aspects of *Heimat* are based on constructs of self and 'other' in a national framework, Popper's background underlines the tensions of belonging in the Central European postimperial space, which German- and Austrian-focused accounts of the genre tend to erase.[61] Aside from Moravian folk scenes, she also produced a series of photographs in Switzerland (Figure 4.6), which closely resemble Austrian *Heimat* photography. Taken around 1935, *Summer* shows a tanned, blonde girl basking in the sun, her eyes closed and a contented smile on her lips. She sits on a slope, wearing hiking boots and knitted socks. Gleaming white, snow-covered mountaintops billow behind her, setting the scene in high mountain terrain. Yet even though the photograph formally seems to fulfil the conventions of *Heimat* photography, it is rarely considered as such. Presumably, the reason for this relates to the origins of its producer: Popper was a Prague-German amateur photographer who exhibited internationally yet predominantly worked in Czechoslovakia.[62] Progressively minded and integrated into Prague's cosmopolitan culture, she first entered photography competitions in the late 1920s and, in 1932, became the first female member of the *Klub deutscher Amateurphotographen* (German Amateur Photographers' Club – KDA), a Prague-based amateur photography organisation with many members of Jewish origin.[63] After 1933, she was mentored by the German-Jewish photographer and designer

PHOTO
KINO
SPORT

Mährische Bäuerin, Grete Popper, Prag
Aus der IV. Internationalen Photoausstellung in Wien—Künstlerhaus

DR. HUGO HALUSCHKA:

AMATEUR-ARBEIT

Unlängst hat Herr Professor Rudolf Koppitz in Wien eine Ausstellung „Land und Leute" veranstaltet, von der dann auch eine Auslese in Graz gezeigt wurde. Der Titel der Ausstellung sagt, was Professor Koppitz damit wollte: Land und Leute zeigen. Es sind mehr Leute daraus geworden, das Land kam ein wenig zu kurz dabei. Trotzdem hat Koppitz nicht zuviel versprochen, man konnte in seiner Ausstellung einen tiefen Blick ins Volk tun, ins Volk, das in der Erde wurzelt und von ihr Kräfte bezieht. Das waren Gestalten, die Mark in den Knochen hatten, das waren Köpfe, denen Wind, Wetter und Schicksal die Form gemeißelt hatten. Das war das, was ich vor Jahren in einem Aufsatz in der Luzerner „Kamera" als „nationale Photographie" gekennzeichnet hatte. Koppitz ist ein genialer Komponist. Wie er mit dem gegebenen Stoff den Bildrahmen füllt, das ist meisterhaft. Er wandelt das gegebene Thema: „Kopf" so unendlich vielfältig und immer wieder neu ab und er vollbringt das mit so geringen Mitteln, mit einem Hut, mit einer Haube, mit einem Kopftuch, daß man ihm den Titel Meister gerne zuerkennt.

Ich will aber keine Besprechung seiner Bilder liefern, sondern nur an diese Ausstellung anknüpfen, um wieder darauf hinzuweisen, was ich schon oft und oft gesagt habe. Der Amateur, der hinauszieht mit seiner Kamera, kann um Motive nie in Verlegenheit kommen. Er braucht nur „Land und Leute" zu photographieren und hat einen nie ganz zu bewältigenden Stoff. Das Land, da wo es „anders ist als zuhause", und die Leute, die ja auch anders sind, so wie sie eben sind. Koppitz hat dafür gesorgt, daß sie ihre alten Trachten anlegen. Er hat sie „gestellt" und hat uns auf diese Weise lebende Bilder gegeben, die man vergebens im täglichen Leben sucht. Das durfte sich ein Koppitz wohl erlauben, der neben einer großen Begabung auch eine strenge Schulung hat. Der Wald- und Wiesenamateur würde bei einem solchen Versuch ganz kläglich Schiffbruch leiden. Er bekäme „Bildeln" heraus, die ganz abscheulich wirken können. Wer also nicht auch ein geborener Regisseur ist, muß anders arbeiten. Er wird wahrscheinlich die Leute in ihren Alltagskleidern nehmen. Er wird ihnen keine Pose geben, sondern versuchen, ihnen ihre Gesten abzugucken und sie zu erfassen. Vielleicht nimmt er sie bei der Arbeit, vielleicht beim Spiel, vielleicht in der Ruhe, aber er nimmt sie. Nicht nur einen, besonders markanten Kopf, sondern viele, Alte und Junge, Schöne und Häßliche, vom Bürgermeister bis zum Straßeneinräumer, von der Großbäuerin bis zur letzten Auszüglerin. Alle Alter, alle Berufe. Immer wieder, bis die Sammlung keine Lücken mehr zeigt. Ist das viel? Ja und nein. Jedenfalls ist die Sache im Zeichen der Kleinkamera nicht mehr unerschwinglich, die einzelne Aufnahme kostet ja heutzutage mehr Mühe als Geld, und hat man sich einmal eingearbeitet, so macht sie kaum mehr Mühe, sondern Freude.

Und neben den Aufnahmen der »Leute« laufen die Aufnahmen des »Landes«. Das gibt dann den Rahmen dazu. Die Wohnstätte des Bauern gehört zu seinem Kopf, das Feld, auf dem er arbeitet, sein Vieh, sein Arbeitsgerät . . . Auch sein Schmuck, Uhr, Kette, Ring, die Pfeife, sein Eßgerät, die Küche, der Garten, die Blumen drin, und was man sonst bei ihm findet. Zum Handwerker gehört die Werkstatt, das »Zeug«, das Produkt seiner Arbeit, auch sein Firmenschild. Zu den Kindern das Spielzeug, die Schule, der Lehrer, die Spiele. Zum Musikanten ein Instrument, zu allen das Wirtshaus, der Krämer, die Kegelbahn, der Schießstand. Der Jahrmarkt, das Kirchweihfest, die Bittprozession, der Taufgang, das Begräbnis. Zu allen das Dorf, die Kirche, der Gottesacker — die Felder, die Wiesen, der Obstgarten, die Weide, der Wald. Der Bach, die Mühle, die

Morgen nach dem Regen
Fukumura Eitaro, Mieken (Japan) Aus der IV. Internationalen Photoausstellung in Wien–Künstlerhaus

Figure 4.5 Hugo Haluschka, 'Amateur-Arbeit', *Photo-Sport* (June 1936), 103. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

Richard Levy (Errell, 1899–1992), leading her to develop a more experimental approach to her images.[64] As her contributions in Vienna show, Popper masterfully adapted to the different contexts her work was shown in. Representing Czechoslovakia, her submission here conveyed 'typical' rural photography of her country of origin. As an amalgamation of pictorialism, documentation, and the touristic snapshot, Popper's photographs clearly responded to the demands for nationalised rural photography as a dynamic cross-border phenomenon. Indeed, Czechoslovakia had its own highly popular variant of *Heimat* photography, which also found positive repercussions in Austria, underlining that the interest in the rural as the representation of the national landscape transgressed state boundaries. Aside from amateur photographers such as Popper and a younger generation of artists like Lukas, the most significant figure in this regard was the photographer, ethnographer, and musicologist Karel Plicka (1894–1987).

Figure 4.6 Grete Popper. *Summer*, ca. 1935. Moravian Gallery, Brno.

The aestheticisation of timeless rural landscapes, which made Koppitz the trailblazer of Austrian *Heimat* photography, found a close parallel in Plicka, who produced a similar, equally popular body of work focused on Slovakia. While Plicka is well-known in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, his work has rarely been considered outside the framework of the First Czechoslovak Republic.[65] Yet as Plicka's reception in Austria shows, *Heimat* photography was a genre with an international profile. By the early 1930s, Koppitz and Plicka's work converged in the sense that they constructed a body of work in which Austria and Slovakia represented untouched cradles of folk culture, manifested through recurring themes of folk tradition and costumes and pristine natural landscapes. These aspects corresponded with the dominant constructions of Austrian and Slovak identity alike and led to the fact that Plicka's work found interest in Austria at a time when *Heimat* was a widespread topic in photography, film, and literature. By and large, it served as a reference point for a foreign yet familiar culture.

In July 1935, the summer issue of *Die Bühne* presented Slovakia as 'the closest foreign country'.[66] 'Only a few hours from a Vienna, an untouched landscape, authentic rural life, wild mountains, powerful alpine creeks, partially almost a primaeval jungle, interrupted by wide farmland, clean villages, little towns and spas, Slovakia represents for the Viennese a thoroughly surprising, unknown nature', goes the description accompanying a photo reportage by the Austrian amateur photographer Nikolaus Schwarz.[67] His photographs affirm Slovakia's position as a folkloric country, where, as one caption reads, 'folk costumes are a natural Sunday dress. However, they are also worn at work, at home and on the field'.[68] The accompanying images show people in folk dress leaving church, working the fields, or as raftsmen pushing down logs, always in crowds, to emphasise life in a tight-knit rural community. In their reportage style, the photographs are blurred to enforce a sense of movement, situating them firmly in modern times to give a contemporary twist to the presentation of pious, happy, and well-nourished rural folk. While the descriptions emphasise Slovakia as 'close foreign country', there are clear parallels between how the Austrian countryside was promoted as *Heimat* and its Slovak counterpart. Using similar tropes, Slovakia represented a familiar 'other', more accessible to Viennese readers than Tyrol or Vorarlberg in western Austria. This positioning also served as a pretext for presenting Plicka's work in Austria with a focus on his film *The Earth Sings* ('Zem spieva', 1933) and his contributions to the German-language travel guide *Columbus in Slovakia* (1936).[69] Together, they show how *Heimat* film and photography transcended the German cultural context and manifested its position as an international phenomenon, which was readily received in Austria: the fascination for the countryside and its construction in the urban space set Austria in dialogue with its neighbouring states.

As it was promoted in Austria, Plicka's work emphasised that *Heimat* photography was an international phenomenon that could reveal the individual nation's 'essence' through the latest technologies. Adding to this the fact that Plicka had the financial backing of the Slovak national organisation *Matica slovenská*, the connection between *Heimat* photography and national identity in his case is even more tangible than in Koppitz's. Additionally, the way Plicka himself is presented draws attention to how the urban photographer-scientist was positioned within the context of his photographs as an explorer who had the necessary technical skills and knowledge of the environment, culture, and people that allowed for the ideal positioning of the countryside as a national place. As a modern man with intimate knowledge of local cultures, his presence gave the medium heightened significance as a national art form. In contrast to Koppitz, who trained as a

studio photographer, Plicka's beginnings were in music and pedagogy. Born in Vienna, Plicka became a Czechoslovak citizen after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire and was involved in the founding of several choirs in the new state, most significantly, the choir of the Czech Philharmonic in Prague. Upon recommendation by the composers Leoš Janáček and Vítězslav Novák, he was employed as a music researcher for *Matica slovenská* in 1923. He soon began to extend his interest in Slovak folk culture beyond music.[70] During the 1920s, Plicka would not only collect thousands of folk songs, melodies and children's games but also began to capture folk life with a camera, which he understood as a complementary practice: his photographs recorded the environment in which the music originated. While the artist's research into music was dedicated to preserving national heritage for *Matica slovenská* as a scientific record, his photographs quickly transcended heritage documentation and preservation. Between 1925 and 1927, 15 postcards of his photographs were published with the support of *Matica slovenská*, continuously reprinted until 1938.[71] Plicka's activities in this light combined different interests in rural culture, which recall those of prominent figures in the Austrian context: ethnographers such as Konrad Mautner and Eugenie Golstern took comparable excursions to alpine villages which they documented with photographs.[72] Meanwhile, the popularity of rural-themed postcards and photobooks was manifested in the careers of Atzwanger, or Adalbert Defner in Tyrol.[73] Yet the highly refined interplay between modernist techniques of photography and idealising tendencies that made Plicka's work so famous find their most striking visual parallel in Koppitz's photographs. Conversely, Plicka's media presence in Austria appears to be related to personal connections between him and the Viennese writer Leopold Wolfgang Rochowanski, who also had a keen interest in promoting Austrian photography and collaborated with several important representatives of Austrian photography at the time, including Haluschka and Koppitz.[74] Plicka's work represented a conjunction of elements Rochowanski had become interested in in the early 1930s, consistently aiming to pair his interest in modern art and culture with the documentation of rural culture in Central Europe. Connecting tourism, a love for travel and the construction of 'authentic' national landscapes with easy access to urban visitors, Rochowanski's presentation of Plicka's work in Austria closely corresponded with how local *Heimat* photography was promoted.

Who is it for? Rural landscapes and people in modern culture

In 1936, Rochowanski published the cultural travel guide *Columbus in Slovakia* for a German-speaking audience yearning to 'discover and to unearth, to carry back home unlosable treasures of joy'.[75] The rural harmony emphasised in the book was well received in Austria. The sense of idyll portrayed in the book offered a welcome escape that perfectly fit into the rural national ideals promoted in the current political climate. As the newspaper *Der Tag* remarked: 'We gratefully enjoy Rochowanski's diligent and precise guide through Slovakia as he conveys an island of patriarchal peace amid our bellicose and industrialised Europe'.[76] Slovakia's 'discovery' through cultural tourism thus built on familiar juxtapositions between modernity and tradition, presenting a peaceful countryside and rural communities as a respite from modern life, as much as an affirmation of the national spirit. The book was almost six hundred pages strong and included over four hundred illustrations and photographs. Even though the narrator comments on some of the pictures and prints included, they also work independently from the text and thus offer a visual journey through Slovakia parallel to the textual narration. The content of

the visual narrative supports an account of Slovakia as an agricultural country steeped in folk art, where selected modern buildings and artworks contrast with an abundance of images of a rural population in folk dress. *Columbus* is not exactly a photo book, yet its emphasis on illustrations parallels the genre, which gained great popularity in Austria in the 1930s.[77]

Starting as a travel diary, attention soon shifts towards Slovak arts, crafts, and architecture, featuring excavations next to functionalist architecture and folk embroidery alongside surrealist painting. However, rather than representing an idiosyncratic collection put together by Rochowanski, a 'lover of Slovakia', *Columbus in der Slovakei* was realised with the support of the Czechoslovak government, promoting Slovakia as a craft-filled, idyllic land, ideally suited to the cultured, urban adventurer.[78] Aside from Rochowanski, two further figures were pivotal in communicating this idea through the project: Plicka and Josef Vydra, an ethnographer and theoretician who founded the School of Arts and Crafts (ŠUR) in Bratislava in 1928. Given its official support and the involvement of two significant figures in the documentation of Slovak folk culture, paired with a mode of presentation that is leisurely and geared to attract the modern traveller, the outlook of *Columbus in der Slovakei* closely resembles the aims of *Heimat* photography as a venture of idealised, national preservation with mass appeal. Rochowanski's focus on Slovakia and his presentation of Plicka's activities for Austrian audiences show how *Heimat* photography was integrated into popular culture, in which national representation through photography was normalised as an international practice.

In this context *Columbus in Slovakia* and Plicka's work allow an additional viewpoint on *Heimat* photography, which has remained invisible in interpretations of the genre as a popular expression of national art: its exoticising elements and the related construction of masculine adventurer-photographer types. Indeed, while *Columbus* was presented as a celebration of Slovakia, described in the introduction as 'a wonderful old chest filled with precious goods', the project entailed as much the idea of Columbus, the conqueror, as of Columbus, the romanticised adventurer.[79] While the title explains the traveller's quest for discovery, the presentation of Slovakia's rural population, their costumes, festivities, and lifestyle inevitably also compares to ethnographic surveys of indigenous peoples in overseas explorations.[80] Nowhere is this relationship between the explorer and the 'natives' more evident than in the leg of the journey the travellers complete with Plicka, set along an extensive selection of stills and photographs related to *The Earth Sings* in the book.

After the film premiered in 1933, it was shown in Prague and Bratislava, Vienna and Venice, and to Czech and Slovak émigré communities in the United States. Thus, its reception was predominantly among urban, educated audiences. One review, published in the magazine *Venkov* in 1933, noted that 'the film wants to represent the illusion of a lost paradise, which will never return in its purity'.[81] The writer Karel Čapek, meanwhile, celebrated *The Earth Sings* for presenting Slovakia as a land of shepherds 'reminiscent of truly 'biblical times'.[82] Based on this exoticisation of Slovakia and its rural population, the film also garnered criticism from Slovak contemporaries who missed the lack of suffering and poverty as other central elements of Slovak culture and criticised its unified presentation as a rural place, even though some areas of the country – notably Bratislava – were urbanised.[83] In Austria, however, a positive presentation of Plicka, the explorer, prevailed. When the film was shown at Vienna's Urania cinema in late 1934, the naivety and innocence of the population were affirmed in an article by Rochowanski in *Der Tag* titled 'Adventures on Set' (Figure 4.7).[84] Emphasising the alleged naivety of the local population, the article features images of shepherd children inspecting the camera, effectively visualising

Die 6. Seite

Erlebnisse beim Filmen

Mit Professor Plicka in der Slowakei

Heute nimmt die Wiener Urania ein Filmwerk besonderer Art in ihr Programm auf. Ein dichterisches Gemüt ist sein Urheber, er machte dazu keinen Entwurf auf Papier, er nahm die Bausteine unverändert aus dem Leben eines Volkes, das seine Freude und sein Leid in Liedern und anderen Gestaltungen auszusprechen versteht. Er nahm dazu keine Schauspieler, sondern die Bewohner, die Jugend jener Erde und die Natur selbst. Der dramatische Verlauf der Jahreszeiten ist die Handlung. Nur ein Musiker konnte sein Herz und sein Ohr so aufschließen, und auf diesem Gesichtswog belaan der Film den Titel: „Die Erde singt." Professor Karel Plicka, der ihn allein dichtete und allein ohne jede Mithilfe in jahrelanger Arbeit kurbelte, hat seine Lebenskraft und seine Liebe jenem slowakischen Land geschenkt, in das wir geführt werden. Nur die Gemeinschaft mit der Seele dieses Volkes gab ihm die Fähigkeit, es zu erkennen und es dann auch für diese Arbeit zu gewinnen. Auf welche Weise sein Film entstand, welche Schwierigkeiten, welche ihn der Erinnerung wohl heiteren) Erlebnisse er hatte, will ich erzählen.

Die erste unangenehme Überraschung brachte der Filmapparat. Gegen Maschinen haben einfache Menschen ein großes Mißtrauen und es dauert lange, bis sie sich ihnen anschließen und anvertrauen. Oft schien das Beginnen günstig. Wenn aber Professor Plicka die unheimlichen lauernden vier Objekte und die vielen Kurbeln hervorholte, war alles verloren. So eine Maschine, riefen die Leute, zieht einem die Schönheit aus, das wissen wir! Andere warnten: Paßt auf, Leutelu, man will euch hopfnehmen! In diesem Augenblick liefen auch schon alle davon und Plicka stand ratlos da. In der Tatra Mogura wurde es einmal besonders kritisch. Irgend jemand hatte in den umliegenden Dörfern ausgesprengt, daß der, der in eine solche Maschine gerät, nicht einmal richtig sterben könne. Das heißt, sterben werde er schon, er werde auch begraben werden, aber eigentlich werde er nicht tot sein, sondern weiterleben. Bis in alle Ewigkeit werde er durch die Welt irren, springen. Komödie machen müssen und niemals zur Ruhe kommen. Das jagte allen Angst ein und selbst die kühnsten Gesellen wollten nicht dabei sein. Doch es wurde ein Ausweg gefunden. Plicka setzte sich mit den Angesehensten ins Wirtshaus, besprach alles, und beim Trinken, erzählt er, haben sie auf alles, auch auf das Leben nach dem Tode, vergessen. Eine ständige Anastvorstellung sind die Steuern. In jedem Fremden wird ein Kontrollor vermutet, und ein vorsichtiger Bauer erkundigte sich: „Wird das nicht neue Steuern bringen, wenn die Herren in der Stadt sehen, daß wir da herausen so lustig sind?" Wer gern ein bißchen wildert oder gar eine geheime Schnapsbrennerei besitzt, ist besonders mißtrauisch, und die erste Frage lautet, ob die Bilder vielleicht in die Stadt zum Gericht kämen.

Scheinen alle Hindernisse beseitigt, ist der Apparat schon genügend beäugt und es geht ans Drehen, tauchen oft neue Zweifel bei den Spielern auf. Eine große Gefahr bringt die Reflexionswand, die zum Aufhellen dunkler Flächen verwendet und mitgefahren wird. Gewöhnlich wird sie bis zum letzten Augenblick verborgen gehalten, um nicht unnötig Erregungen auszulösen. Oben auf die polnische Grenze zu war einmal ein altes Goralenweiblein bereits für die Aufnahme gewonnen und stand schon im Blickfeld. Da fiel das Licht des großen Spiegels in ihr Gesicht. „O Gott!" schrie sie auf, „was für ein unbarmherziger Blitz, o, o wie er schlägt! Schadet er nicht dem Menschen?" Um sie zu beruhigen, wird einer der zahlreich anwesenden Verwandten aufgefordert selbst durch den Apparat zu schauen. Aber was geschieht? Kaum schaut er durch ruft er lachend: „Die, Alte, du bist ja mit den Beinen nach oben!" Alle lachen mit, und das Großmütterchen gerät in noch tieferes Entsetzen. „Mit den Beinen nach oben? Zum Gelächter geb ich mich nicht her!" Nun wird eine andere Frau vor den Apparat gestellt und das Weiblein soll sich selbst von den Eigenschaften der Maschine überzeugen. Kaum findet sie sich beim Durchschauen zurecht, ruft sie: „Nun freilich, sind in Ordnung!" Diese Feststellung genügt, sie begibt sich auf den Platz und Plicka kann endlich beginnen.

Das herrlichste Stück des Plicka-Films — er wurde heuer in Venedig ausgezeichnet und brachte erst kürzlich in Berlin großen Erfolg

Prof. Karel Plicka, der Autor des Films „Die Erde singt".

— sind die Räuberspiele, sind die Hirtenkinder, die sie bieten. Der Held Janošík, den man einmal hen Bergen machte und der dann in unzähligen Liedern, in Epen und Romanen besungen und verherrlicht wurde, lebt wirklich noch in den Männern und Kindern dort oben. Plicka war der glücklichste Mensch, als er sie gefunden hatte. Immer wieder sucht er sie auf, ruft sie mit ihren köstlichen Spitznamen. Er ist das ganze Jahr unterwegs. Eigentlich ging er der Lieder wegen in die Slowakei. Sein Fleiß hat bisher zwanzigtausend aufgeschrieben. Seinen Kreuz- und Querfahrten durch die Slowakei habe ich ihn lange Zeit vergebens gesucht. Aber einmal sah ich einen großen Menschen mit Apparaten beladen eine Bergleehe hinaufsteigen, — das war Plicka. Wie so oft im Sommer, wenn alle Leute auf dem Felde beschäftigt sind, fand er nicht einmal einen Träger für sein schweres Gepäck und mußte alles selbst tun. Seine Begeisterung erleichterte es ihm. Er war gerade auf dem Wege zu einem Goralenbauer und ich schloß mich ihm an. „Nur hier," war einer der ersten Sätze, die er zu mir sprach, „hier in dieser Umgebung, die den Kummer der Zeit vertreibt und nach dem ewigen Frieden ruft, kann alles fühlen. Es geht mir nicht um eine effektvolle Oberfläche. Seit Jahren lebe ich gemeinsam mit diesem Volk, und wenn das Lied ein treues Bild seines Lebens ist, dann glaube ich, daß mir seine Welt so nahe ist wie kaum einem anderen."

Naturgymnastik der Kinder

Auch seine kleinen Künstler gewann er erst nach und nach für den Film. Sein bestes Mittel war, bei allem mitzutun, wie ein Frosch zu hüpfen und auf Figeurerisch zu tanzen. So erzang er ihr Vertrauen. Kleine Preise halfen mit. „Zur Zeit, wenn die Knaben weiden", erzählte er mir, „ist's auf den Höhen am lustigsten. Es sind dann auch Mädchen da, es wird gesungen, getanzt und getollt, es gibt so viel Zeit, sich Späße auszudenken und gerade die Originalität ihrer Späße lockte mich immer wieder und wieder an diese Orte. Die Buben wetteifern miteinander ganz nach Art der ehemaligen Räuber, sie sind fest und fromm und ihre Künste sind von einer so phantastischen Kühnheit daß es einem angst und bange wird. Wie arm sind gegenüber dieser Naturgymnastik die Spiele und die erdachten Übungen städtischer Turnschulen. Die Buben von der Tatra kennen natürlich kein Turnverät. sie bilden es sich selber aus ihren Leibern, nur selten benützen sie dazu die Balaska oder eine Bank. Das, was die Kinder hier machen, ist für zwiel und mißverständlich. Wildfang aber doch etwas zu zahm und unrichtig.

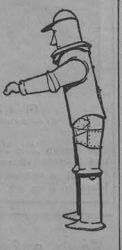
„O wie herrlich ist es", sagt Professor Plicka mit strahlendem Gesicht, „hoch oben

Die „Künstler" machen sich mit dem Appa.at bekannt.

bei einem Felsen oder auf einer Wiese mit den Hirten zu arbeiten. Wir scherzen, wir singen, wir vertrödeln die Zeit, ohne Absicht davon sich die Szenen auf und dann — dann schelten wir die Millionenkerzen des lieben Gottes lichtes ein. zur rechten Zeit fliegen gerade auch ein paar Wölkchen daher und wir filmen wie richtige Filmleute."

L. W. Rochowanski.

Der Mensch vom Jahre 2000



In einer Maschinenausstellung, die jetzt in Turin zu sehen ist, wird ein neuer und vervollkommneter Maschinenmensch gezeigt, ein „Robot", der offiziell „der Mensch vom Jahre 2000" heißt — für den Fall, daß unser mechanisches Zeitalter nicht vorher mit einem weithin hörbaren Gerassel zusammensinkt. Äußerlich sieht dieser neueste Robot oder Golan etwa aus wie ein gepanzerter Ritter. Ein Mitarbeiter des „Corriere della Sera" schildert den Kopf des Ungeheuers als eine Schachtel aus Aluminium, mit einer Art Visierhelm, die Augen sind zwei elektrische Lämpchen, die Nase eine kleine Pyramide im zylindrischen Gesicht, der Mund ein gerader Schnitt. Dieser „Kopf" sitzt auf einer Röhre, in dem allerlei Mechanismen stecken, Arme und Beine sind primitiv gesormt. Die ganze Figur sieht wuchtig aus, wiegt aber, da sie aus Aluminium ist, nur soviel wie ein lebender Mensch — 60 Kilo.

Im Inneren dieser vage menschenähnlichen Hülle stecken nun Akkumulatoren, die eine ganze Anzahl winziger elektrischer Motoren betreiben; der eine hebt z. B. wenn der Robot geht, seine Beine, der andere, wenn er arbeiten soll, seine Arme, der dritte setzt, wenn er reden soll, ein verborgenes Grammophon in Bewegung. Künstliche Antennen hat man schon gesehen, aber das Bemerkenswerte an diesem Turiner Robot ist, daß er durch feinerlei Drähte an seinen Herrn, den Operateur, gefesselt ist: sondern das Gehirn wird mit Hilfe einer kleinen Radiostation in Bewegung gesetzt, die ebenfalls von Akkumulatoren gespeist wird und die durch drahtlose Kraftübertragung den Mechanismus im Inneren des Robots kontrolliert. In Turin steht diese Robotanlage in der gleichen Halle wie der „Mensch vom Jahre 2000" — aber es besteht theoretisch kein Hindernis dagegen, daß sie aus weiter Ferne auf diesen Maschinenmenschen oder auf eine ganze Armee von Maschinenmenschen wirke.

Der Robot von Turin hat ein neuerfundenes Gyroskop im Leibe, das ihn dazu befähigt, im vollkommenen Gleichgewicht zu stehen, zu gehen, zu marschieren, zu rennen — man kann sich schon heute ein Bataillon metallener Polizisten vorstellen, das im Gleichschritt gegen eine demonstrierende Menge vorrückte, bewaffnet, hirnlos, seelenlos, aber unverwundbar. Natürlich könnte der Maschinenmensch doch unsichtbare die schwersten Arbeiten verrichten und menschlichen Arbeitern das Brot wegnehmen, das er selber nicht braucht. Er ist schon ein bißchen unheimlich, der Mensch vom Jahre 2000, der unter Umständen die Menschen von vorher ausrotten könnte!

Lector.

Hollywoodiana

In Hollywood geht jetzt Charles Laughton, der berühmte Darsteller Heinrichs des Achten, mit einem rasierten Schädel herum, und mit Groll im Herzen. Laughton hätte in dem Film „David Copperfield", der im Entstehen ist, die Figur des Miawber spielen sollen, und der Regisseur bestand darauf, daß er sich den Kopf rasieren lasse. Laughton verlangte erst, daß ihm nach der Vollendung des Films solange noch Gage gezahlt werden müsse, bis ihm die Haare nachwüchsen. Das wurde ihm verweigert, weil er ohnedies 50.000 Dollar für die Rolle bekommen sollte. Also ließ sich Laughton den Kopf rasiehalf rasieren — und bekam zwei Tage darauf Krach mit dem Studio, schuß die Rolle hin, verzichtete auf das Honorar, und beschleß nichts, als einen rasierten Schädel. Nun kann er mit dem neuen Film, in dem er spielen soll, nicht anfangen, weil er noch keine Haare hat. Am meisten dürfte ihn kränken, daß der Schauspieler W. C. Fields, der an seiner Stelle den Miawber spielt, es im Schmuck seiner Haarmähne tun darf.

Figure 4.7 Leopold Wolfgang Rochowanski, 'Erlebnisse beim Filmen. Mit Professor Plicka in der Slowakei', *Der Tag* (23 November 1934), 6. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

an asynchronicity between modern technology and peasant life. With Plicka, the travellers seem to be accompanying the 'real' Columbus of Slovakia. Showing a 'hands-on' approach to exploration, Plicka's journeys and difficulties in collecting songs are described. Parallel to this, he features in several photographs behind the camera and in conversation with his 'actors' in *Columbus in der Slovakei*. Though always distinguished from them by way of dress and different camera installations, Plicka is presented as the friend of the ordinary people, who all too gladly tell him their long-preserved songs and let themselves be photographed after overcoming their initial shyness: as the reader is told, 'simple people have a strong distrust of machines'.[85] Even though Slovakia's rural population speaks occasionally, their framing as 'noble savages' dominates. Bolstered by the photographs, the journey through Slovakia shows a healthy peasant population, who appear to be an attraction for the cultural explorer. Living symbiotically with nature and amid a homely environment of carefully ornamented bliss, they represent 'happy natives', easily fitting into an entertaining narrative and embellishing the story with humorous little anecdotes, which emphasise the clash between urban, experienced traveller and backwards yet preciously naïve rural inhabitant.

Presented as a 'tell-all', in which Rochowanski reiterates Plicka's days on set in the most adventurous terms, the article in *Der Tag* is a piece of popular reportage, which extends Slovakia's presentation as a paradisiacal close exotic to Viennese readers. It also presents an ideal 'type' of photographer to record such themes, embodied by Plicka as an explorer who 'composed [*The Earth Sings*] alone and recorded it over several years, alone, without any help'.[86] Leaving aside that the film was a production supported by *Matica slovenská* and completed in collaboration with the famous Barandov film studios in Prague, the orchestra of the National Theatre in Prague, as well as film editing by one of Czechoslovakia's most progressive young directors, Alexandr Hackenschmidt (1907–2004), Rochowanski mythologises 'Professor Plicka' who wanders the Tatra mountains by himself, aiming to immerse himself into rural life to produce 'authentic' material. He jokes with the shepherds, lets the children assist him in inspecting the camera equipment and wins people's trust by drinking with them in the local pub and listening to their sorrows until, finally, 'without intention scenes manifest themselves and then – then we switch on a million candles of God's light, just at the right time some little clouds come by and we film like real film people'.[87] This last phrase reinforces the impression that rather than planning, cutting and editing hundreds of meters of film material, for Plicka, everything fell into place naturally, based on his interaction with people and landscape. It implies a sense of authenticity and realism, grounded in the fact that only Plicka ventured out, gained people's trust and returned with plenty of film material in reward for following his life's passion.

Remarkably, Plicka's presentation as 'Columbus' facing Slovakia's rural population reverberated with similar attitudes in the local Austrian context, too. Even though impressions of rural life circulated so widely across artistic and popular channels, the lives of the actual rural population mattered little when hunting for the perfect *Heimat* photograph. Instead, they were shown as naïve and stubborn country bumpkins whose archaic beliefs and values had to be navigated to bring them in front of the camera in a suitable pose. The amateur photographer and alpinist Theodor Prock's article on photographing rural communities speaks volumes here.[88] His essential advice is:

> Dear cosmopolites, one main thing: do not feel superior to the farmer. You are not really; you might be in knowledge but not in your human value. Your condescending

> behaviour is thus misplaced and, more importantly, represents a thoughtless misstep in your methods. You will have to earn their trust and affection. Thus, if someone tells you how Saint Barbara became the patron saint of the guild of trumps, there is no reason to respond with a superior smile.[89]

Although Prock emphasises that photographers and farmers have 'the same human value', he replicates the cosmopolitan superiority he criticises in his readers by emphasising the trivial, folkloristic concerns of the rural population. Given that in the overall focus of the article, holiday making plays an important aspect – being the very reason that urban amateur photographers would venture out into the countryside – accounts of rural life remain jovial and idyllic. Prock's advice to 'gaining the trust and affection' of the population closely resembles the narratives of Plicka in the Tatras: the photographer should give the rural population time, eat and drink with them, listen to their stories without ridicule and ask about their work to later capture it from its best side. Followed by a technical guide about light and flash installation, the correct distances and the right lenses to use, the article concludes: 'In their simple character, they might not wait to be photographed by you, but they will support you with joy in the discovery of the precious culture of our *Heimat* for you and others, and to preserve it for posterity in pictures. Because they slowly become extinct'.[90] As the last sentence shows, amateur photographers were called upon to support the preservationist aims of *Heimat* photography in a process that cared little about the actual lives of rural inhabitants but functioned in an ethnographic manner, similar to how Plicka's efforts were described in both the Czechoslovak and the Austrian press. Rural populations might have gained a heightened visibility in *Heimat* photography across Central Europe, yet they represented a mere ideal. In the end, it was the perfected rural photograph that counted, for amateurs and artists alike. In this light, *Heimat* photography also underlines that the genre harboured a strongly gendered dimension based on the role of the photographer. As nature-loving adventurers who would leave their urban base for excursions to remote rural regions, the *Heimat* photographer type embodied by Plicka and Koppitz and emulated by a broad base of amateurs closely fit with other ideals of modern masculinity in the countryside, such as the alpinist and the explorer. With few exceptions, *Heimat* photography was thus a domain of male photographer who could transgress the binaries between city and countryside in their efforts to preserve images of a vanishing world.

Ultimately, in the transgressions between amateur and artistic practice, *Heimat* photographs helped to construct ideologically charged and highly effective countryside imagery through a patriarchal and paternalistic lens that served claims of national authenticity across Central Europe. Processes of modernity were intrinsic to the making and circulation of these images: not only did they depend on modern hand-held camera equipment, but they also reinforced the role of the modern traveller-explorer seeking to preserve and record vanishing native cultures. This ethnographic aspect served both the legitimisation of a national homeland, which was crucial to the ideology of the Austrofascist regime, and the presentation of individual photographers like Koppitz and Plicka as masculine prototypes of artist-adventurers encountering 'untouched' rural landscapes. They forged highly enigmatic images and offered simplified visions of rural life for urban audiences, which played with tropes of modernist photography yet sought to convey a traditionalist core. Not least, they also framed exclusive national states across the region, while making

other groups invisible. Presenting a typology of 'typical' places and people, continually repeated and reprinted in the light-hearted set-up of photo publications and pictorialist exhibitions, they constructed homogenous views, coded notions of belonging in ethnic terms, and tied them to the national landscape. While not intrinsically reactionary, therefore, the photographs that represented *Heimat* nonetheless forged landscapes of exclusivity across Central Europe in which the idealisation of the countryside was driven to new heights.

Notes

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5 Socialist Dystopia?

Leftist Visual Culture and Rural Margins as a Political Battleground

On the cover of the socialist illustrated magazine *Der Kuckuck* on 23 June 1929, a man in ragged clothes faces the camera (Figure 5.1). His feet are stuck in boots without shoelaces. He carries a woven basket with sickles and a hammer on his shoulder, pointing towards his profession as a reed cutter. In the background, a canal is lined by reeds that have already been cut and bundled; evidently, the man is photographed at his workplace. Since the image only indicates the man's profession, not his identity, he appears to represent a 'typical' rural worker. In the two-page spread of the related reportage, a similar approach is taken towards the photographic subjects: in a montage of different images, people are shown in traditional dress, described as 'typical' farmers by the author of the accompanying essay, signing as Joh. H.[1] Shown as they follow rural manual labour, such as cutting hay, weaving, and bringing water from the village well, the reportage conjures an image in which the farmers toil all day 'and still cannot escape hunger and misery'.[2] The article roots the cause of the matter in the old hierarchy, continuing from the Habsburg Empire: even though the region is 'only an hour from Vienna on the train' and was a part of the Austrian Republic since 1921, a bulk of the land there continued to be owned by Hungarian aristocracy, leaving a majority of farmers to work on land that was not their own. The reportage calls for land reform to allow farmers to own enough land for their own subsistence. It also proposes the building of 'rural workers' homes' away from the farms they were employed in, recalling social housing projects in Vienna at approximately the same time.[3] The images accompanying the text present aspects of poor farmers' lives, emphasising the lack of modern technology and the need to complete extra work, such as spinning and weaving, to make ends meet. Contrasting the farmers' full-length portraits, two cut-out images show a large, luxurious farmhouse, the other a rich landowner. The composition of the photographs themselves is conventional, yet the way they are used to construct a visual narrative alongside the report stresses their function as revelatory content.

'Farmers without Land' shows that there was a counter-side to the image of countryside bliss circulating as *Heimat* photographs, in middle-class illustrated magazines, tourist advertising, and rural-inspired painting. Claims of support for the agricultural population in this vein pertained to preserving a highly abstract image of rural life, in which economic hardship was positioned as a sign of German character strength. *Heimat* photographs by Rudolf Koppitz and Peter Paul Atzwanger affirmed this through idealised imagery, matching ideas of 'the timeless village and the "eternal" peasant' by conservative thinkers such as Oswald Spengler and Guido Zernatto, supported by the Christian Social party and, later, the Austrofascist Fatherland Front and the National Socialists.[4]

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-6

Figure 5.1 *Der Kuckuck* (23 June 1929), cover. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

More critical views and leftist agitation in visual culture have received little attention in the scholarship by comparison. Yet, minor as these activities may have been compared to developments in neighbouring Hungary and Czechoslovakia, engagement with rural poverty in leftist visual culture was nonetheless present in interwar Austria, and a discussion of rural modernism would be incomplete without it. Even more so, since it shows an attempt to direct attention to the people living in the countryside, who otherwise often featured as mere props in idealised views.

Industrialisation in Austria was slow and often only reached the agricultural population in the 1940s and 1950s.[5] Poverty among rural populations was widespread, exacerbated by patriarchal structures and the dependency of farm helpers on the families they worked for, often without any insurance or other securities.[6] Consolidated attempts to include this rural population into political agendas surfaced in the mid-1920s, both to the left and the right of the political spectrum, addressing questions of land reform and rural workers' rights and political representation.[7] Calls for land reform, for example, were supported by the Austrian Socialist Party and Christian Social Farmers' associations alike, demanding redistributions in a move to break up the properties of big landowners.[8] The Burgenland and Lower Austria were the two provinces most affected by this situation. In the Burgenland, 44% of the land was owned by large landowners, contrasting more mountainous touristic regions of western Austria, where smaller alpine farm estates historically dominated.[9] Little has been done to explore how parties to the left of the political spectrum aimed to incorporate the rural population into their programmes and which cultural strategies they developed to support this. Yet from the mid-1920s onwards, the Austrian Left increasingly campaigned for the rights of the country's rural poor and agricultural communities, and attempts to introduce these topics in mass culture can be found in a range of socialist and communist publications such as *Der jugendliche Arbeiter*, *Die Freiheit*, *Die rote Fahne* and the weekly illustrated magazine *Der Kuckuck*.[10] Directed by the graphic designer Siegfried Weyr (1890–1963), *Der Kuckuck*, in particular, not only followed a progressive political but also aesthetic concept. It 'lent mass politics the face it needed to be effective', with regular contributors including modernist photographers and reporters such as Edith Tudor-Hart (née Suschitzky, 1908–1973) and Lothar Ruebelt (1901–1990).[11] Indeed, the publication was uniquely positioned in interwar Austria as a popular illustrated mouthpiece for the Social Democrats, the country's strongest left-wing party. Concomitantly, it also offered distinctive views on rural life, which added considerably more nuance to the otherwise unequivocally idealising images of rural life.

A focus on photography in the countryside in *Der Kuckuck* also gives insight into wider distinct practices of image-making: rural social documentary and worker photography, a widespread practice in Central Europe.[12] The chapter thus sets Austria's leftist press in relation to developments in other Habsburg successor states, affirming sustained connections and interactions after 1918. It traces how a leftist perspective on the rural population forged an image of it as a place of struggle rather than rural bliss. Here, people were supposed to stand in focus in a shift away from an idealising view of nature and quaint villages. In the process, an understanding of what encompassed the non-urban space also expanded. Aside from the rural landscape, it also included production sites on the margins, homesteads, and makeshift dwellings in the peripheries. Considering rural areas as a dystopian 'hinterland' in alignment with socialist rhetoric, the chapter analyses how leftist photographers sought to draw attention to rural poverty and inequality. A politically motivated critique of the new states and their failures to address rural poverty gained a strong presence among leftist artists in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, for example, who worked with

new media and positioned their work in the popular sphere. Indeed, just as Plicka's images found a presence in Austria through his picturesque presentation of Slovakia, links between left-leaning artists and photographers across the region were affirmed in the circulation of images in magazines and exhibitions and through different groups and organisations. Related to this was also the importance of youth movements in forging alternative views of the countryside. The most notable one was the socialist touristic association *Naturfreunde* ('Friends of Nature'), which sought to develop solidarity among its members through tours at home and abroad and served as a model and facilitator for groups across the region, who not only took touristic photographs but also collected visual records of living conditions in remote areas. The chapter draws attention to critical images of rural margins as they circulated in leftist magazines, their appeals to worker and amateur photographers, and their aims to construct a critical and politically engaged view of rural life in a context where images of rural bliss dominated. Especially as the National Socialist party gained ground in rural Austria in the early 1930s, the Left made increasing efforts to include agricultural labourers in their programme, straddling between presentations of the countryside as a place of leisure and its role in an accelerating political battle.[13]

Rural labourers or farmers? Deconstructing the rural-urban divide

While *Heimat* photography had a highly unified and comprehensive presence in modern Austrian visual culture, its socio-critical counterpart was represented more haphazardly. Visible in the illustrated press yet aligned with notions of class struggle rather than specific geographies, it is thus difficult to speak of an organised movement of social photography in the countryside, as it was present in neighbouring Hungary and Czechoslovakia.[14] The presentation of farmers had to be adjusted to fit into the broader base of the industrial proletariat and its strong associations with Vienna. Consequently, socialist magazines and newspapers preferred the term 'rural labourers' rather than 'farmers' to refer to the rural population.[15] Oscillating between alpinist movements to further solidarity among socialist youth and calls to urban workers to 'educate' their rural counterparts, calls to empower the rural working class only played a marginal role in direct relations with rural workers. Indeed, despite a strong rhetoric, their treatment was largely paternalistic and rural labourers were considered as part of the *Lumpenproletariat*, the lowest group in the social order, which were considered to have little political consciousness and could easily be swayed in the wrong direction.[16] Especially after the rise of National Socialism in Germany in 1933, the rural population was presented as particularly susceptible to reactionary ideas. As such, it became the task of their urban counterparts to 'save' them from making the wrong political decisions. For example, the socialist writer Hans Braundorfer asserted, 'the word rural proletarian youth [*Landarbeiterjugend*] means unimaginable suffering, the lack of an existence worthy of a human, the lack of any culture. For centuries, they have been the most exploited people of the proletariat'.[17] Encompassing industrial workers in peripheral towns, small cottagers and farmers, and farmhands, who often lived in the most precarious situation and were entirely dependent on their employers, the rural proletariat was a broad category. Yet they were united by the fact that the urban activists drawing attention to their plight saw them as the most helpless and disadvantaged section of society.

A noteworthy example for this is a sociographic study of poverty and long-term unemployment, focusing on a small town in Lower Austria, Gramatneusiedl, some 30 kilometres from Vienna. Importantly, this proximity to the capital indicates that the radius in which ethnographic and political activities from the left of the political spectrum were most engaged was concentrated on an area within easy reach of Vienna in Lower

Austria and the Burgenland provinces. By contrast, alpine regions to the opposite side of the country found less space in critical discussions about rural poverty. Consequently, the geography of rural poverty in the socialist press largely maintained a division between the Alps as a holiday space, since they focused on the country's eastern flatlands as regions of social hardship. Even though living conditions for small-scale farmers and rural labourers in the Alps were just as precarious, the image of rural disadvantage stayed firmly in a place separate from Austria's mountainous holiday lands. The study in Gramatneusiedl was no exception in this case. Published by the young sociologists Marie Jahoda, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Hans Zeisel for the Austrian Institute for Economic Psychology, *Marienthal. The Sociography of an Unemployed Community* (1933) traced the consequences of long-term unemployment, focusing on former workers of the Marienthal textile factory, which had closed in 1930, leaving most people in the village jobless.[18] Marienthal was chosen as a place of research because the small-town structure offered the opportunity to study a whole demographic of the unemployed, which would have hardly been possible in a metropolitan setting.[19] The village setting provided a 'closed rural community [that] finds it easier to keep functioning over an extended period [and that] has greater resistance against breakdown than the multitude of urban unemployed'.[20] The understanding of the uniformity of the village and its inhabitants' apparent character strength ('no extreme symptoms of mass neurosis' as in the urban space) was thus based on familiar notions of rural communities as more stable and unchangeable than in urban settings. Recalling the argument by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies that 'everyone who praises rural life has pointed to the fact that people there have a stronger and livelier sense of community', the Marienthal study implies that, despite the diverging political interpretations of rural communities between conservative and progressive forces, their formative perceptions remained the same; not least because they always projected an outsider view, from the city onto the countryside.[21] While the findings of the study focused predominantly on the effects of unemployment, they also implicitly confirmed the inhibited status of rural communities in terms of political action and differentiated rural and urban inhabitants even from the perspective of the socialists who sought to unite them. At the same time, the study offered a wholly different image of the countryside than any of the ideals popularised in the *Heimat* photographs published at the same time, speaking not only of barren soil that makes farming life hard in the area but also of the different textile industries that had settled in rural areas during the nineteenth century in search for cheap labour:

> Within an hour's walk from Marienthal, several small villages are similar in history and structure. One is Velm, with its knitwear industry, where the girls earn about thirteen to eighteen Austrian schillings per week. Then there is Goetzendorf with its cotton mill, where production has been severely cut back and where the weekly wages are twenty-eight to thirty-two schillings; Unter- and Oberwaltersdorf with small mills and a similar wage structure; Mannersdorf with its quarry, where the workers take home up to thirty-two schillings per week; and Moosbrunn, where the glass factory has been closed down for some time.[22]

Far from an 'untouched' or even a touristic countryside, the report drew attention to a rural industrialised area caught up in old patriarchal structures. Rather than showing a concern for the 'vanishing peasant', a recurring theme in the political thought of conservative thinkers, the study was thus concerned with the fact that industrialisation in Austria's rural areas was regressing, exacerbating the everyday toil of the rural population.

Das Leben in Marienthal

Forschungsreise in ein Arbeitslosendorf

Marienthal. Die Schnellzüge donnern vorüber. Sie kommen von Budapest und fahren über Wien nach Paris. Dreiviertel Stunden von der Eisenbahn liegt der Textilarbeiterort, der heute nur mehr Arbeitslose beherbergt. Die Fabrik wird abgewrackt, die Maschinen wurden abmontiert und versendet, die Schornsteine werden ungelegt. Spinngewebe ist das einzige, was hier noch gewebt wird.

Marienthal ist an der Arbeitslosigkeit erkrankt. Achtzehn Familien leben von irgendeiner Pension, zweiundzwanzig Familien haben noch irgendeinen Erwerb — mehr als vierhundertfünfzig Familien sind arbeitslos.

Vor einem Jahre hat eine Gruppe junger Forscher und Studenten den Plan gefaßt, hier in Marienthal die Wirkungen der Massenarbeitslosigkeit zu studieren. Sie kamen mit Hilfsaktionen in das stille Marienthal, sie brachten den erwerbslosen Textilarbeitern, was nur in ihrer Macht stand: Kleider, ärztliche Hilfe, Elternberatung, sie hielten Kurse für die Jugendlichen, und während sie hergaben, sammelten sie zugleich ein. Aus vielen tausend Beobachtungen, aus Wirtschaftsbüchern, Speisezetteln, Lebensberichten fügte sich das Mosaik dieser großen sozialen Reportage über die „Arbeitslosen von Marienthal" zusammen, das nun als schmales, unscheinbares Bändchen vor uns liegt. Nicht viel mehr als hundert Seiten — aber wie viel erfahren wir über das Leben dieser Marienthaler Textilarbeiter, die die Krise aus ihrer Lebensbahn geschleudert hat.

Vom Textilarbeiter zum Zwergbauern

Das Leben dieser Menschen beherrscht ein Gesetz, das für sie unendlich viel wichtiger ist als alle anderen: das Arbeitslosengesetz. Die Unterstützung schwankt zwischen 3 S und 26 Groschen pro Person und Tag (das Buch ist schon wieder ein paar Monate alt und daher leider überholt). Das ganze Leben des Ortes dreht sich daher um den Tag, an dem die Unterstützung ausgezahlt wird. Der alte Kalender hat für die Arbeitslosen jeden Sinn verloren. Nicht der Sonntag, sondern der Auszahlungstag müßte in den Marienthaler Kalendern rot angestrichen sein. Die Kinder in der Schule wissen auch bereits genau, wann der nächste Auszahlungstermin ist. Sie spüren es an ihrem Gabelfrühstück: am Tage vor der Auszahlung bekamen von 38 Schulkindern 19 überhaupt kein Gabelfrühstück oder doch nur trockenes Brot. Am Tage nach der Auszahlung erhielten alle bis auf zwei Kinder ein Gabelfrühstück. Aber nicht immer ist der Auszahlungstag ein Feiertag. Er bringt ja auch die Kürzungen der Unterstützung und für manche die Aussteuerung.

Am Gelde hängt doch alles...

Da haben die Studenten in Marienthal vier Gruppen ermittelt, in die die Arbeitslosen nach ihrer Gesamthaltung und Stimmung eingereiht werden können. Und seltsam: diesen vier Gruppen entspricht eine gewisse Höhe der Unterstützung.

Gruppe	Unterstützung in Schillingen
Ungebrochen	34 S
Resigniert	30 S
Verzweifelt	25 S
Apathisch	19 S

Fünf Schilling weniger Unterstützung bedeutet also unter Umständen bereits schwere Depressionen, den Abstieg vom Mut zur Resignation, zur Verzweiflung (die doch noch immer mit einer gewissen Aktivität untermischt ist) und zuletzt zur völligen Apathie. Das Arbeitslosengesetz entscheidet darüber, ob man mehr oder weniger hungern muß, und darum ist es für die Arbeitslosen etwas ganz anderes, als etwa die Verfassung. Haben die Arbeitslosen irgendeine Möglichkeit, ihr Einkommen zu vergrößern? Auch diese Frage wurde in Marienthal möglichst eingehend studiert. 392 Familien besitzen einen Schrebergarten, ein Stück Land, das ungefähr 65 Quadratmeter ausmacht. Etwa ein Viertel der Einwohner betreibt etwas Kaninchenzucht. Das ist im wesentlichen der ganze denkbare Nebenverdienst. Der qualifizierte Arbeiter ist froh, die Existenz eines Zwergbauern zu führen, und während man die Maschinen in der Weberei und Spinnerei abmontiert, sticht er seinen kleinen Schrebergarten um. Die Fürsorge der Gemeinden muß notwendigerweise aufhören, weil Marienthal, wie alle Arbeitslosengemeinden, so gut wie gar keine Einnahmen besitzt. Und nun können wir uns der Frage zuwenden, die den Verantwortlichen in Österreich viel zu wenig Kopfzerbrechen bereitet: Wie lebt man von einer Arbeitslosenunterstützung, die im Höchstfall 3 Schilling ausmacht, die aber auch bis auf 26 Groschen heruntergeht?

Zurück zur Kriegszeit

In einer der Lebensgeschichten, die die Verfasser des Berichtes über Marienthal gesammelt haben, findet sich die Feststellung, daß es jetzt in Marienthal wieder genau so sei wie während der Kriegszeit. „Nur daß jetzt alles in Überfluß vorhanden wäre", fügt der Marienthaler Textilarbeiter hinzu. Ja, es ist wieder wie in den vier Hungerjahren des Weltkrieges. Aus dem Haushalt ist der Zucker verschwunden (Zuckerzoll und Zuckersteuer!) und das Sacharin hat seinen Einzug gehalten. Die Butter ist weg, und die Margarine wird natürlich sparsam verwendet. Wieder gibt es fleischlose Tage und Wochen. Von 41 Marienthaler Familien wurden eine Woche lang Eßverzeichnisse gesammelt. 22 Familien lebten sechs Tage in der Woche ohne Fleisch. Nur am Sonntag gab es irgendein kleines Stückerl Fleisch. Sechs Familien hatten die ganze Woche kein Fleisch auf ihrem Tisch. Der Aufhackknecht des Fleischhauers berichtet: „Solange die Fabrik in Betrieb stand, schlachteten wir zwölf Schweine und sechs Rinder in der Woche. Jetzt genügen sechs Schweine und ein Rind, die aber meistens von den Leuten aus der Umgebung gekauft werden. Die Marienthaler sind zum Pferdefleisch übergegangen." Aber von den zwei Roßfleischhauereien des Ortes geht es nur einer halbwegs gut. Es gibt also auch nicht genug Kunden für Pferdefleisch. In den Eßverzeichnissen der 41 Marienthaler Familien findet man 56 Fleischmahlzeiten in einer Woche. Davon waren:

34 aus Pferdefleisch,
18 aus Kaninchenfleisch (natürlich selbstgezüchtetes),
2 aus Rindfleisch,
1 aus Faschiertem,
1 aus Schweinefleisch.

Aber ein Arbeitsloser berichtet, daß auch Katzenfleisch gegessen wird. „Immer wieder verschwinden Katzen, Katzenfleisch ist sehr gesucht. Auch Hunde werden gegessen. Erst vor wenigen Tagen bekam ein Mann einen Hund geschenkt, unter der Bedingung, daß er ihn schmackos erschlägt. Er lief überall herum um ein Geschirr für das Blut und bekam schließlich eines, dafür mußte er ein Stück Hundefleisch hergeben." Sieht man vom Fleisch ab, so besteht die Hauptnahrung der Marienthaler Arbeitslosen aus einfachen Mehlspeisen (der Mehlkonsum ist gestiegen), aus Kartoffeln und Brot. Von 287 Abendessen bestanden in Marienthal 132 nur aus Kaffee (meist ohne Milch) und Brot. Natürlich ist es kein Bohnenkaffee, der getrunken wird, sondern Malzkaffee und Feigenkaffee. Der Bohnenkaffee wird inzwischen in den Lokomotiven von Brasilien verheizt.

Und trotzdem: Blumen!

Wer diesen dürftigen Speisezettel gesehen hat, wird zunächst nicht ohne Staunen hören, daß in den Schrebergärten von Marienthal noch immer auch Blumen zu sehen sind. „Da gibt es Beete" — sagt der Bericht —, „die eine Ernte von 80 Kilogramm Kartoffeln liefern könnten, und die mit Nelken, Tulpen und Rosen bepflanzt sind." Auf die Frage, warum dies geschieht, lautet die Antwort: „Man kann doch nicht nur vom Essen leben, etwas muß man doch auch fürs Gemüt haben." Und so erklärt sich, was scheinbar unerklärlich ist, als die ungeheure Sehnsucht dieser Menschen, die die Gesellschaftsordnung unter Ausnahmezustand gesetzt hat, nach etwas Schönheit. In dem Buch über Marienthal werden einige erschütternde Beispiele dafür angeführt: Da ist eine ausgesteuerte Familie, die längst vom Zucker zum Sacharin übergehen mußte, aber wie ein Hausierer durch den Ort zieht, kauft man plötzlich für 30 Groschen ein — Pappendeckelbild von Venedig. Oder eine Frau kauft plötzlich, alle Budgetsorgen vergessend, ein Bilderbuch für ihr Kind. Und wieder denkt man an den Krieg und an Schützengräben, die von den Soldaten „ausgeschmückt" wurden.

Die letzten Kleider

Aber während die Arbeitslosen noch immer um etwas Schönheit kämpfen (wär's auch nur in der billigen Gschnasform, in der gerissene Unternehmer auch noch aus den Ärmsten ihren Profit holen), steht eine große drohende Gefahr vor den Marienthalern auf: von der Arbeitslosenunterstützung kann man sich vielleicht noch halbwegs ernähren, aber auch die sparsamste Hausfrau wird keinen Schilling erübrigen können für die notwendigen Anschaffungen. Was soll geschehen, wenn die Kleider und die Schuhe zerreißen? Die Arbeitslosigkeit in Marienthal ist kaum dreieinhalb Jahre alt. Aber schon gibt es Kinder, die tagelang der Schule fernbleiben müssen, weil sie keine Schuhe haben. Ein Vater berichtet, daß seine ganzen Kleider nach und nach auf Kinderkleider umgearbeitet werden müssen. Er kann ja zu Hause bleiben, aber die Kinder haben noch eine Aufgabe, in die Schule zu gehen. Die Schuhe der Kinder werden meist von den Vätern selbst geflickt. Vor nichts haben die Marienthaler größere Angst als vor dem

Schluß auf Seite 16

Die Fabrik ist abgewrackt

Der Roßfleischhauer

Figure 5.2 'Das Leben in Marienthal', *Der Kuckuck* (2 July 1933), 14. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

The Marienthal study was primarily text-based and did not include many images. However, it established a clear and publicly compelling poverty demographic at Austria's geographical margins. A related article in *Der Kuckuck,* 'Life in Marienthal' (1933) (Figure 5.2), pointed out that the village is located in a barren stretch of land linking Budapest and Vienna.[23] Thus, even though the village was considered a closed community, it existed in an in-between space, not hermeneutically closed off but located at the crosslines and constantly interacting with forces of modernity.[24] As such, it also challenged the specific 'mental and social categories' that terms such as 'countryside' and 'village' were constructed as in popular *Heimat* imagery, emphasising that city and countryside were not as far removed from each other as may be assumed.[25] Indeed, this proximity between the city and rural impoverished areas was an often-used tactic to draw attention towards the stark contrasts in interwar Austria's social set-up, recalled in titles such as 'Fifteen kilometres from Vienna' and frequently emphasised at the start of articles on rural poverty.[26] 'Fifteen kilometres from Vienna' also visited impoverished families in Gramatneusiedl.[27] A former refugee camp for families fleeing fighting during the First World War, emergency barracks were rented out there or occupied by families in desolate circumstances, some working in the surrounding silk, tobacco and petrol factories, others unemployed. Published two years before the Marienthal study, the visual reportage 'Fifteen kilometres from Vienna' draws attention to prolonged economic hardship in rural areas. Significantly, the images used for the two reportages are the same, although cropped differently. Even though the two articles are never linked directly, referring to two different quarters in Gramatneusiedl, Mitterndorf and Marienthal, they provide continuous narratives of Austria's rural margins. The fact that the same images are used suggests that the originality of photographs was of secondary importance to the message the reportages sought to convey. The photographs reinforced this by emphasising dismantled industrial building structures of the textile manufacturing industry and makeshift housing. Clearly, the socialist press sought to mediate contrasts between the city and the provinces, calling for solidarity. Yet it is notable that even though the village setting was crucial to the Marienthal study, the photographs focused on the industrial character of the place, presenting readers with more familiar images of urban poverty.[28] This draws attention to one of the main concerns regarding critical representations of the provinces: How could images of rural bliss be dismantled effectively in a media environment saturated with idealising views?

The first step was to challenge conceptions that positioned the rural population as oppositional to the urban worker. Nowhere is this more evident than in the reprint of a radio lecture by Ernst Winkler, published in *Der jugendliche Arbeiter* in September 1929 (Figure 5.3). 'City and Countryside' blames the idealisations of the city and the countryside for misunderstanding and competition between them. Winkler argued that the disadvantaged – workers – in both spaces must unite to improve the lives of both.[29] The photographs illustrating the text apply a set of contrasts to emphasise the differences between glossy perception and working-class reality: the city is first presented as an 'American metropolis', presumably Chicago: 'This is how beautiful the metropolis is – but only for the rich'.[30] The following image, zooming into street life, shows children in ragged clothes playing on the streets while the background disappears in the city's smog. Here, the description 'this is how sad the streets of the poor are' suggests a realistic image of urban life from the perspective of people experiencing poverty, kept notably abstract as if to imply that this was not about a specific city but in reference to the inequalities defining the metropolis more generally. The countryside, by contrast, is recognisably 'Austrian': 'This is how beautiful it is in the countryside' shows three people in profile overlooking a hilly landscape. Since the photograph is taken from the shadows, the sitters' profile and the trees that frame their bench are shown in striking black outlines, while the hilly landscape beyond them gleams in the sunshine.

7

Aber die Landleute haben keine Zeit, um die Landschaft zu bewundern!

man kann hier von einer wahren Interessengemeinschaft reden!

Sind schlechte Löhne für Herrn Hinterhuber ein Vorteil?

Ja, wird man uns einwenden, wenn wir schon zugeben, daß in der Preispolitik zwischen Städtern und Landleuten kein Gegensatz besteht, so könnt ihr doch nicht leugnen, daß die Landwirte in einem Gegensatz stehen zur Lohnpolitik der städtischen Arbeiterschaft. Denn bedenkt: Wenn die Industriearbeiter höheren Lohn erringen, so wirkt dies auf die Löhne der Landarbeiter zurück. Denn dann müssen auch die Landwirte ihren Arbeitern höheren Lohn bezahlen und sie laufen ihnen in die Stadt, wo höherer Lohn winkt. Sehen wir uns dieses Argument an!

Österreich hat rund 6,500.000 Einwohner. Davon sind 3,400.000 erwerbstätig. 40 Prozent aller Erwerbstätigen, also 1,360.000 Menschen, sind in der Land- und Forstwirtschaft beschäftigt. Wer sind nun diese 1,360.000 Landleute? Sind das lauter Großbauern? Keine Spur! 37 Prozent der in der Landwirtschaft Beschäftigten, das sind 503.000 Personen, sind Lohnarbeiter. Sie sind gleich den städtischen Arbeitern Proletarier. Sie können durch höhere Löhne ihrer städtischen Arbeitsbrüder nur gewinnen, weil dann die Gutsbesitzer und Großbauern auch ihre Löhne erhöhen müssen, um ihr Abwandern in die Stadt zu verhindern. Wie aber stehen die selbständigen Landwirte zur Lohnpolitik? Das wird ganz verschieden sein. Die Gutsbesitzer und Großbauern, die viele Knechte und Mägde beschäftigen, werden gegen die hohen Löhne sein. Die Klein- und Mittelbauern aber, die keine fremden Arbeitskräfte beschäftigen, sondern ihre Scholle mit Frau und Kind bearbeiten, die werden nicht gegen die hohen Arbeitslöhne wettern. Im Gegenteil: Da sie sich selbst öfter als Taglöhner verdingen müssen, da sie wissen, daß ihre eigenen Kinder einmal Arbeiter sein werden, und weil sie auch verstehen, daß ihnen höhere Löhne der städtischen Bevölkerung den Absatz ihrer Erzeugnisse erleichtern, werden sie für hohe Löhne sein!

Bauern und Arbeiter — vereinigt euch!

Nach der Statistik sind in Österreich — ohne Burgenland — 51½ Prozent aller landwirtschaftlichen Betriebe bis zu 5 Hektar und 32 Prozent von 5 bis 20 Hektar groß. Das heißt: *83½ Prozent aller Landwirte sind Klein- und Mittelbauern!* Die überwiegende Mehrheit der ländlichen Bevölkerung hat sowohl in der Preis- wie in der Lohnpolitik dieselben Interessen wie die städtische Arbeiterschaft! Und es ist klar: So wie das Arbeitervolk der Städte und das arbeitende Landvolk wirtschaftlich zusammengehören, so gehören sie auch politisch in eine Partei: in die Partei des schaffenden Volkes, in die Sozialdemokratie!

Leset und verbreitet die „Arbeiter-Zeitung"!

Figure 5.3 Ernst Winkler, 'Stadt und Land', *Der jugendliche Arbeiter* 9 (1929), 7. Austrian National Library. https://anno.onb.ac.at

The image following on the next page continues the thought of the beautiful rural environment: 'Yet the people from the countryside have no time to admire the landscape!' The related photograph shows men and women harvesting hay with bent backs, shielding their faces from the sun with hats. As the article below notes, 37% of agricultural workers are labourers, and, as such, 'proletarians like urban workers'.[31] The images affirm the text's message through references to rural and urban poverty. Yet, in the rural images, hard labour was difficult to deduct from an image closely resembling views of agricultural labour that concurrently was heavily idealised in *Heimat* photography. Aside from the struggles to visualise rural hardship effectively in a single image, the distance between the photographer and the depicted reveals that claims for mutual understanding fail to address both factions equally. Again, the countryside is seen from an urban perspective, and the distanced view of the photograph suggests that its workers are unaware of the political fight they should be a part of. This very approach is a recurring theme, culminating in a 1932 special issue of *Der jugendliche Arbeiter* titled 'Out to the village'. On the cover, young hay cutters are on their way to work, their backs turned to the camera. Here, the figures' uniform clothes and movement in a large group uniform images of factory workers, drawing visual similarity between the (imagined) readers of the magazine and the people in focus on its pages. Yet, this visual approximation is not evident in the texts leading through the issue. Similar to the paternalistic tone of amateur photography advice articles, discussed in the previous chapter, readers are encouraged to hike in the countryside to 'learn about and understand the lives and thoughts of the rural people'.[32] Excursions to rural areas were presented as a pedagogical mission with the goal of 'bringing [socialist] culture' to remote areas, where the only source of entertainment for the young are 'large beer tables and pints of cider'.[33] From a sociological and activist perspective, including the 'rural proletariat' in socialist action was thus heavily skewered, framing trips to the countryside as civilising missions. Visual representation of rural hardship was even more complex since neither images of industrial environments nor fieldwork could adequately represent it, running the risk of either erasing local settings or idealising them. As such, different strategies had to be elaborated to convey the 'right' message.

Leisure and activism: Social photography, the Austrian exception, and rural photography beyond borders

Pierre and Marie-Claire Bourdieu have suggested in a study on peasant uses of photography in southwestern France (1965) that among rural communities, photographs were perceived as an urban luxury, which they deemed unsuitable for their purposes apart from on special occasions.[34] Photography was seen as an activity of the 'urbanite' and, as such, it was against the 'peasant ethos' to practice it at leisure.[35] Not least, camera equipment was expensive despite its growing affordability, representing a luxury many rural workers simply could not afford. These cultural and economic conditions explain why circulating photographs of rural communities were often taken by outsiders who arrived in the countryside already with a specific goal in mind. Indeed, as the assessment of *Heimat* photography and amateur movements has indicated in Chapter 4, rural photography was closely intertwined with touristic, ethnographic, and sociological concerns. Often, these activities were also conducted in groups. By the 1930s, different regions in central Europe saw the founding of specific groups such as Sociofoto and

Sarló in Czechoslovakia to take activist sociographic photographs.[36] Yet the practice of collective image-making in the countryside reached back to the late Habsburg Empire with the example of the *Naturfreunde* association. Founded in Vienna in 1895 by the teachers Georg Schmiedl and Karl Renner, later republican Austria's first Chancellor, the socialist *Naturfreunde* promoted 'meaningful' leisure activities through engagement with nature, hiking, and further education in the form of seminars and organised trips.[37] In 1905, the association founded its international branch, *Naturfreunde Internationale*, which had over 200,000 members in 22 countries by 1933, including Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.[38] Photography and the necessary technical training had played a part in the association's pedagogical and touristic programming early on, and by 1906, the first clubs of *Naturfreunde* amateur photographers were founded.[39] While the primary focus of these clubs lay on landscape and touristic photography, the rise of worker and social photography in the late 1920s also led to the inclusion of less idealised themes, which found its most substantial repercussions in leftist youth movements in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Even though these practices were not as common in Austria, different factions of Vienna's *Naturfreunde* regularly supported exhibitions of worker photography by its members and invited groups from neighbouring countries to exhibit their work.[40] In this light, the *Naturfreunde* held an essential position in facilitating the distribution of social photography in Austria, even though the focus of their own amateur factions did not necessarily produce this kind of work. Despite their predominantly touristic outlook, critical sociographic exhibitions were welcomed and emphasised cross-border solidarity. In 1932, for example, the photography group of the Munka Circle, an activist association of leftist artists founded by the avant-garde artist and writer Lajos Kassák, held an exhibition at the premises of the *Naturfreunde* in Vienna, before travelling to Budapest and Bratislava on similar arrangements where the organisation also supported them.[41]

The exhibition represented one of the Munka Circle's most significant projects of the group's photography section, culminating in the bilingual Hungarian-German photo book *A mi életünkböl – Aus unserem Leben* ('From Our Lives', 1932).[42] Introduced by Kassák on the occasion of the Munka Circle's social photography exhibition in Szolnok, Hungary, which led to his arrest for inciting public unrest after he encouraged amateur photographers to record social injustice, demonstrations and unrest, the book was presented as an activist statement, emphasising the transformative powers of photography.[43] Termed 'socio-photo' by Kassák and the writer and critic Lajos Gró, the Munka Circle supported a new mode of photography wholly dedicated to recording poverty and social injustice.[44] It built on the conviction that photography could relate to a broader section of society than any other art form. Gró drew a sharp distinction between worker photography as an activist art and amateur photography as a leisurely 'Sunday pastime'.[45] Encouraging readers of the magazine *Munka* ('Worker') to see photography not as a hobby but as a 'weapon in the class struggle', Gró advocated the importance of a specific photographic style and the right choice of imagery. Beyond adhering to particular motifs, the way these were depicted played an equally important role. The main aim was, therefore, to create a distinct type of photography. As Kassák noted, the socialist photographer 'consciously follows his objectives and composes his pictures with a socialist angle', creating images which at once 'validate his point of view and give it a distinctive character'.[46] Photography historian Melanie Ventilla has analysed *From Our Lives* as a quasi-didactic venture in this context, which sought to present the main characteristics

of social photography as an activist art.[47] Advised strategies included the juxtaposing of images to formulate a sympathetic image of ostracised communities, as well as attention to details such as bare feet to draw attention to poverty. The images adhere to modernist compositional conventions with cropping, steep angles, and unusual points of view. They exemplify an ideal mode of social photography as a combination of modernist form and social content for activist purposes. Much less explored is the relevance of rural areas to the book's argument about social injustice: included photographs such as *In the Port* and *With Broken Violin* imply that marginalised social groups were at home in peripheral geographical spaces, be it in the suburbs or the countryside. Indeed, continuing Ventilla's argument that *From Our Lives* was 'essentially an instruction manual for artists on how to construct a socially conscious image', the book introduced a specific way of seeing the countryside that had a 'revelatory' angle, expressed through a modernist visual language, and circulating throughout Central Europe.

At the hands of artists and trained photographers, social photography adopted experimental viewpoints and compositional techniques to show proletarian life in its 'true' light. [48] Across the region, leftist theorists debated the 'right' way of implementing an aesthetic that would serve the photographs' claim to realism.[49] Merging an interest in modernist artistic production, ethnography, sociology, and political activism with the use of the camera as an instrument of 'truthfulness', social or worker photography consistently renegotiated the relationship between art and activism, form, and content. It sought to find new ways of depicting the 'everyday' lives of those at the lower end of the class spectrum. Variously termed worker photography (*Arbeiterfotografie* in Germany and Austria, *munkásfotó* in Hungarian) or social photography (*szociofotó* in Hungarian, *sociální fotografie* in Czech and *sociálna fotografia* in Slovak) the movement rooted in the aim of enforcing medium's potential as a realist mass art rooted in working-class culture.[50] Initially, this goal was achieved by encouraging a broad base of amateur photographers from the working class to record motifs from their daily lives. *Der jugendliche Arbeiter*, for example, published a special issue about worker photography in 1931, in which it not only showed and analysed the winning photographs of its reader competitions but also stressed that photography was to be put 'into the service of our higher aims': 'Who knows how to read them properly, will learn many new things from them and realise connections, which were previously unknown'.[51] Following, thus, the aim of using photography as a weapon, as is explicitly stated by the editor-in-chief of *Der Kuckuck,* Weyr, on the following page, photographers had to search for new motifs to counter picturesque photography 'to express a political thought visually'.[52] Introducing photography competitions and advice features on taking the 'right' photographs, worker photography was presented as an emancipatory practice with the potential to counter the glossy images of middle-class magazines, which, as the previous chapter has indicated with the example of *Der Weltguck*, employed similar practices. One frequently cited example of how such photographs ought to look was a reportage by Russian photojournalists Max Alpert, Arkady Shaikhet, and Sergei Tules, 'A Day in the Life of a Moscow Worker Family'.[53] Published in the German illustrated magazine *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (*A-I-Z*) in 1931, the series followed the daily activities of an 'ordinary' working-class family in Moscow and showed 'the achievements of socialism in improving the living conditions of the working classes'.[54] Worker photography thus aligned socialist ideology with a celebration of everyday working-class culture and promoted the Soviet Union as a worker's utopia in magazines across Central Europe. This was also true in

relation to rural life more specifically: In *Der jugendliche Arbeiter*'s December 1933 issue, readers would have encountered a picture of a young woman on a tractor, accompanying an article about 'the red well-to-dos' that celebrated the effective modernisation of agricultural production in the Soviet Union and the happy lives of agricultural workers as a consequence (Figure 5.4).[55] Since the communist party was in a weak position in Austria and the Social Democrats showed scepticism towards the Soviet Union, such images of modernised agricultural labour were rare compared to their wide circulation in magazines such as the *A-I-Z*. However, their presence in the *A-I-Z* undoubtedly also affected Austrian readers: for one, the magazine circulated in the millions by the early 1930s, reached readers in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia and even published an Austrian supplement in the late 1920s.[56] Moreover, for its highly successful image strategies, the *A-I-Z* also proved to be a contentious example for *Der Kuckuck*. Indeed, latter was founded in reaction to the *A-I-Z*'s attempts to expand its Austrian readership with special supplements about the country. This proved to be a successful counterstrategy: the *A-I-Z* stopped its Austrian special issue shortly after *Der Kuckuck*'s first publication.[57]

Including figures such as Siegfried Taub, the magazine's chief editor in Czechoslovakia and a delegate of the *Labour and Socialist International*, *Der Kuckuck* not only focused on Austria but also paid sustained attention to political developments in other Habsburg successor states. Through close ties between the German Social Democratic Workers' Party in Czechoslovakia and the Austrian Social Democrats, the magazine was directed also to Czech-German readers with its own editorial office in Prague. A third of *Der Kuckuck*'s issues was published in Switzerland and German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia.[58] Given this broader circulation, *Der Kuckuck* can be understood as a toned-down, Central European version of the *A-I-Z*, which built on a network of photographers and reporters to offer a wider regional focus. Still, much like the activities of the *Naturfreunde* (whose photo clubs also had close ties to the magazine); the magazine proved to be an 'Austrian exception' that sought to show social engagement while having difficulty in finding the images it wanted to promote among work produced by its readers. Clearly, *Der Kuckuck* was not as militant as *A-I-Z*, and instead, 'was conceived […] as a means to reform proletarian vision and, more broadly, to elevate workers culturally and prepare them to enter into a new socialised humanity'.[59] One of the critical goals in this light was not only to supply the 'right' kind of images (works that emphasised the leftist class struggle) but to engage workers in producing these kinds of photographs themselves. Realising this goal was problematic. For example, the advice given to worker photographers in the magazine stressed fashions of pictorialist photography to a much greater extent than the *A-I-Z*.[60] This was all the more pertinent to rural areas, where the goal often remained to show the workers' visual literacy by producing captivating imagery of nature, as is described in *Der Naturfreund*, the organ of the *Naturfreunde*:

> We are workers. Either in the factory or in the office: rationalisation, intensification, and conveyor belts have dissolved earlier work methods, and they harness all of our power. - This has transformed our thought. We are nature lovers. The rattling train takes us through the suburbs, out into nature. We hike across swelling hills and see how the harvest ripens. We climb through snow and ice to a lonely summit: Serenity and an expansive view are our profit. -That transforms our feelings. We are photographers. We view the world with transformed thoughts and feelings and search everywhere for beauty. Where we find it, we want to show it to our brothers and sisters.[61]

DER ROTE WOHLHABENDE

Landarbeiterin führt einen Traktor Unionbild

Im Gebiet von Odessa gibt es eine große bäuerliche Kollektivwirtschaft, die bei der Gründung „Der rote Arme" genannt wurde. Heuer hatte diese Kollektivwirtschaft eine ausgezeichnete Ernte. Die Kollektivwirtschaft „Krasny Nesamoschnik" (Der rote Arme) hat nicht nur den Pflichtteil an Getreide dem Staat abgeliefert, sondern so viel erübrigt, als zur Ernährung der Mitglieder der Kollektive und zur Fütterung des Viehes notwendig ist. „Der rote Arme" hat auch noch Überschuß zum Verkauf auf freiem Markt erzielt. Die Mitglieder der Kollektivwirtschaft haben beschlossen, ihre Kollektivwirtschaft umzutaufen. Sie wurde „Krasny Samoschnik" („Der rote Wohlhabende") genannt. Diese Umbenennung ist ein Zeichen der Wandlung, die sich in Rußland vollzieht. Das Lebenshaltungsniveau der bäuerlichen Bevölkerung zu heben, ist das Ziel der Sowjetregierung. Dieses Symbol der Umbenennung der Kollektivwirtschaft ist ein herrlicher Beweis, wie es der Sowjetregierung gelungen ist, die großen Schwierigkeiten in der Landwirtschaft zu überwinden und die Arbeiter- und Bauernrepublik aus den wirtschaftlichen Gefahren zu befreien.

DER WINTER BEGINNT

Jetzt kommt wieder die Zeit des Wintersports Skifahren Photo Kurt Röder

10

Figure 5.4 'Der Rote Wohlhabende', *Der jugendliche Arbeiter* 12 (1933), 10. Austrian National Library, Vienna. https://anno.onb.ac.at

Combining 'combative' photography and pictorialism was a difficult task, and, throughout, *Der Kuckuck* only partially succeeded in finding the base of activist worker photographers it sought. Instead, the reporters Bruno Völkel and Rudolf Spiegel founded the 'Working Group of Reporters for *Der Kuckuck*', which was predominantly active in Vienna and Graz as a professional organisation for the socialist press.[62] All too often, photographers were thus not worker-amateurs but artist-activists or reporters with a social conscience, a contrast further exacerbated between a mobile urban population and rural communities. The political aims of social photography in the countryside were thus subjected to sharp contradictions from the outset: demanding a specific visuality to counter idealisation while also asking for engagement with settings that photographers would, most likely, only encounter as tourist-reporters, the insights set to be at the core of social photography were built on precarious grounds. One strategy for circumventing the effective lack of worker photographers was through reportages to reveal social hardship. Rather than celebrating rural workers, the most pertinent mode of leftist-engaged photography in central Europe was, thus, the 'denunciative mode' of worker photography: it focused on the desperate living conditions that the impoverished working class suffered from, especially after the Great Depression hit the region around 1930.[63]

New forms of image-making: Reportages and series of the countryside

It was difficult to distinguish a leftist aesthetic when it came to rural areas in particular. In an article warning of the threats of National Socialism to rural labourers in *Der jugendliche Arbeiter* in 1932, the photograph 'Homebound from fieldwork' shows a man and a woman from behind, riding on a horse-drawn carriage. They travel on an unpaved road lined by trees, with the blurriness of the photograph indicating that the image was taken on a moving vehicle. While the carriage and the road may be interpreted as markers of infrastructural deficiencies, the composition leaves little room to argue that this was a worker or social photograph. Indeed, the symmetric composition appears rather conventional; only through the blurriness of the movement does it gain a dynamic of movement that gives it a contemporary angle. There clearly were limits to the left's social idealism through image-making, and they frequently operated within the same cultural framework as those derided as 'bourgeois'.[64] Even though rural activist photography was seamlessly integrated into social photography, it often confirmed the same stereotypes of rural 'backwardness' as in tourist advertisements and *Heimat* photography.[65] Indeed, there was no special consideration of how 'the rural' should be explicitly approached. Far from immune to idealisations of the countryside, activist photographers developed various strategies to construct 'the rural' that matched the rhetoric of anti-capitalist critique and class solidarity developed in urban areas, and upheld celebrations of rural life as ideal communities at the same time.

The most important aspects of achieving an effectively engaged social photography were 'not to pose anything, not to group anything in a kitsch or sentimental manner, but to present things truthfully and objectively, and to always use the fastest, most effective and propagandistic form'.[66] Yet, as widely understood by leading figures such as Weyr, realism was not explicit to the medium, so it was critical to find the right form. Photography historian Matthew Witkovsky summarised the issue at the heart of this matter: 'Photographs were understood, however naively, to convey truths, but those truths

Figure 5.5 *Der Kuckuck* (27 April 1930), cover. Austrian National Library, Vienna. https://anno.onb.ac.at

needed to be underscored, put to work'.[67] At the hands of artists and trained photographers, social photography thus adopted various strategies to show proletarian life (urban or rural) in its 'true' light. Serial or cyclical works helped to forge narratives through multiple images. That these were particularly favoured concerning rural settings is stressed by the writer Hans Korn in 1931. Focusing on topics such as 'Hiking' and 'Weekend', the tasks of the young worker-photographer should encapsulate the parameters of social photography between modern forms and rural settings. Examples of approaching the topic 'Weekend' in line with the goals of the socialist photographer, according to Korn, included the contrasting of idealised rural images with close-ups that revealed the 'boundless social misery' hidden behind it.[68] Highlighted through image groupings or photomontage, such contrasts should stress a critical view of everyday rural life. How to realise this successfully was a different matter.

An April cover of *Der Kuckuck* from 1937 (Figure 5.5), for example, features a *Landarbeiterin* ('female rural worker') in a steep angle shot from below, standing on barren ground in the opening of a makeshift wooden fence.[69] Wearing a traditional dirndl dress and apron, she carries a large bundle of firewood, supporting herself on a walking stick. The compositional frame dramatises her bent position while adding a dynamic point of view, contrasting the subject matter. The female rural worker, the image suggests, is a strong labourer caught in archaic living conditions. A one-page report in the magazine extends this issue, accompanied by five photographs that show women completing different tasks around the rural household. 'Work into the late night, work without end – this is her destiny'.[70] The article draws on the fact that women's work in the countryside was crucial, since they were both responsible for tasks in the house and the field, while men would hardly interfere with 'women's work'. A gendered division of labour thus meant that the household economy could 'barely function without a woman on the male head's side' in farming communities and rural working-class households.[71] The images accompanying the text depict women at work. Yet, particularly those images displaying rural labour, such as the milking of the cows and fieldwork, again, can hardly be distinguished from idealising photographs. A critical perspective ensues only through the caption, 'in the scorching heat and the biting cold she must work hard in the field'.[72] Clearly, images had to be arranged differently to avoid falling into all too familiar images of an idealised countryside if they were to convey a critical message.

Despite, or precisely *because* of these pitfalls of rural photography that the *Landarbeiterinnen* essay so clearly visualises, the series was an essential form to expand narratives beyond the constraints of the single photograph. In doing so, it maintained an air of documentary 'truth' value yet followed a less stringent programme than scientifically rooted typologies, allowing photographers to approach topics from a broader perspective. The German photographer August Sander's *Antlitz der Zeit* (*Face of our Time*) was a frequent visual reference in this context.[73] First published in book form in 1929, it showed a range of portraits Sander had taken across the previous decade. He produced a series of over 40,000 portraits from the early 1920s until the 1960s, organised by markers such as profession and gender, with the intention of giving a comprehensive overview of modern humankind.[74] To capture individuals 'truthfully' and 'in their whole psychology', Sander's portraits showed people in their own living or working environments, frontally facing the camera, sometimes as individuals, sometimes in groups.[75] Regardless of profession or social status, they stand in upright

postures and display a heartfelt seriousness that underlines the photographer's intention to capture the personalities of his sitters. With the aim to gauge 'reality', Sander's serial photography showed how one's environment could be understood in its completeness.[76] Contrasting the related system of 'typology' employed in racially biased, pseudo-scientific projects such as Erna Lendvai-Dircksen's *Das Deutsche Volksgesicht* (*The Face of the German Race*, 1932), the goal of the series was not to define but rather to give a more comprehensive and 'non-hierarchical' overview of contemporary life.[77] The series was, thus, 'a collection which can be (dis)organised according to a vast array of principles, such as "variations on a theme", modified forms, homogenous elements, heterogenous elements, etc.', which had a more significant potential of 'self-reflection and dialectic' than the typology.[78] In this form, it represented an ideal way for activist photographers to underline the long-term consequences of social and economic hardship and to build a wide-ranging portrayal of its effects. By extension, it also helped construct a dialectical image of rural life, encompassing a sense of the 'rural idyll' and of difficult living conditions alike. Building on what Walter Benjamin has called (in relation to Sander) 'unprejudiced observation' as the central aspect of serial photographs, social photographers created narratives of rural poverty, which seemed better suited to the complex relations between 'backwardness' and vernacular culture than single images could contain.[79]

Der Kuckuck frequently emulated strategies employed in the *A-I-Z* (Figure 5.6), and this also included visual reportage series from the countryside. 'One of the millions' by the Viennese artist and photographer Alexander Stern ('stal', 1894–1970), a member of the 'Working group of reporters for Der Kuckuck', was a feature directly adopted from the *A-I-Z*.[80] It introduces the cottager Krull and his wife Anna from the province of Styria. The reportage begins with portraits of Mr and Mrs Krull in frontal portraits. Both have their hands propped on tools that draw attention to their hands, marked by years of hard manual labour. Even though the portraits are not full-length, the central positioning of the figures and their direct gaze into the camera recalls the composition of Sander's portrait series. His sober style is evoked by the two portraits of the reportage and its title, which implies that the Krulls represent agricultural labourers in Austria more widely. At the same time, the portraits of the Krulls are not taken from a straight angle but with the lens directed slightly upwards, reinforcing a monumentalised, heroic view of the workers. They set the individuals at the centre, presenting them as strong and confident individuals. The report consists of a series of ten photographs overall that include the portraits, documentary images of the family's house and plot, and more dynamic snapshot photographs that depict the daily life of the Krull family. From a compositional point of view, the most striking works are the portraits of the parents and, on the second page, a snapshot of two of the children sitting on the stairs while eating potatoes with salt, the family's daily meal, as the report tells its readers. On the first page, the photographs are densely arranged across the page in three lines, split between the portraits, the house and Krull at work in an easily understandable order.

While the photographs of the Krulls show them as strong working-class figures, the rundown state of their dwellings and precarious labour described below the images simultaneously celebrates the people of the working class while drawing attention to their desperate living conditions. The people and their situation are thus considered separately yet entwined, going in hand with the implication that the working class, rural and urban alike, harbours unrealised strength that needs to be united

Figure 5.6 Alexander Stern, 'Einer von Millionen. Der Keuschler Krull und seine Frau', *Der Kuckuck* (6 November 1932), 9. Austrian National Library, Vienna. https://anno.onb.ac.at

in the class struggle. This framing is made even more apparent through the text, which is kept to a minimum overall. It offers brief descriptions to contextualise the images in a sarcastic tone to emphasise the family's poor living conditions. For example, Krull himself is described as 'This is him! A human carthorse, a robot, a face full of unconditional honesty', while his wife Anna 'never let herself be pushed to the ground just because she has seven children'.[81] The family home is called a 'house' in inverted commas to point out its decrepit state, while the roof is described as 'a sky full of sorrow' which 'might crumble any day'. Agriculture here signals everyday toil with barely enough wages for the family, forcing Anna and the children to produce concrete pipes, which 'sometimes provide the only income for the family'. The sarcastic tone in which the accompanying text is written and the visual references to other socially engaged image practices, Sander's portraiture and *A-I-Z* reportages situate Stern's contribution in a wider network of images, which affirms rural poverty as part of the class struggle. This helps the report to balance out the picturesque photographs of village life and the squalor living conditions of their inhabitants, displaying it as one of the inherent contradictions of rural life. Beyond the images themselves, their outlets and the related discourses around image-making gave them a socially engaged directive. 'One in a million' thus exemplifies how the interlocking of different strategies of social photography could be used to forge an engaged, leftist image of the countryside.

Small-scale opposition: The limited reach of counter-images

Compared to the high visibility of idealising images of the countryside, the focus on *Der Kuckuck* and *Der Jugendliche Arbeiter* in this chapter underlines that an engagement with critical social photography on the left side of the political spectrum occurred in closed circuits. Despite showing an interest in developments by social photographers in neighbouring countries, Austrian social photography never caught on to the same extent as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Arguably, it was difficult to counter the idealisation of the countryside from the other side of the political spectrum, not least because they also employed the same strategies for different outcomes.[82] An extended series focusing on agricultural labour in Austria can be found in the work of the farm engineer Armin Kniely, for example, who was employed by the chamber of agriculture in Innsbruck in the early 1930s, recording 'grievances, faults as well as opportunities' of rural life in the Tyrolean mountains.[83] Producing thousands of photographs over nearly 40 years, Kniely's images can be understood as the Alpine equivalent of an extended social documentary series, focused exclusively on Tyrol's farming population. Even though Kniely's work was not aligned with the activist aims of social documentary photography, it nonetheless corresponded with essential aspects of the practice in that it recorded the ordinary with particular attention to a sober recording style. Similarly, Franz Macho's *Farmers in the Pinzgau* (1930) or Simon Moser's *Heuarbeit* (1930) documented rural life with a more realistic view of impoverished farming communities. However, given their politically conservative outlook, the key message of their work was to frame hardship as a sign of strength in alignment with German national ideals of 'blood and soil'. Moser, for example, continued his publishing activities under National Socialism in series that idealised the poverty of the rural population as markers of the extraordinary virility of the German *Volk*.[84] Finally, it must also be acknowledged that the political left was far from immune to rural idealisation itself. In 'Sunday

in the Village', published in *Der Kuckuck's* July 1929 issue, readers could encounter a wholesome village idyll in the alpine pilgrimage site of Heiligenblut, Carinthia.[85] Fulfilling all the cliches of rural idyll, photographs by the Viennese amateur photographer and journalist Karl Ausch (1893–1976) show genre scenes, including men, women and children in folk costume, quaint religious processions, and heart-warming genre scenes. The alpine village becomes a familiar escape from urban life: 'Just how different life is in the countryside compared to the city! Different Interests, different forms of entertainment, a different culture – two worlds which are only a few hours on the train apart yet could not be more different!'[86] While constituted on the same premise as 'Farmers without Land', that a new world could be discovered near Vienna, 'Sunday in the Village' corresponds with the image of rural Austria as a happy, touristic place in the popular imagination of the urban visitor. Even in a socialist illustrated magazine, rural poverty was segregated from the country's alpine space as a vital region, contrasting a touristic 'West' with an impoverished 'East'. In the end, therefore, images of the countryside in the socialist press not only failed to match the aesthetic standards envisioned by editors – despite numerous competitions and advice manuals.[87] They also could not get away from a focus on beauty (of nature), only engaging with rural poverty to broaden the base of its political message in a time of heightened political tension in the 1930s. In other words, despite all efforts, the countryside remained an idyllic space that more often represented a respite for urban workers than a location of social activism. In Austria more so than in neighbouring countries. The power of the image of the idyllic countryside in the modern imagination clearly won over efforts to forge a more nuanced picture, remaining an imagined space wholly created from an outsider's perspective.

Notes

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6 Rural Exotic

The Countryside as a Place of Difference

Up until this point, this book has stressed that rural-inspired art and visual culture in interwar Austria built strongly on urban perceptions of the countryside, in which leisure activities and tourism played a pivotal role. In the process, the people living in the countryside became part of this urban projection, preferably casting them as farmers in traditional dress, living archaic lifestyles. This presentation of 'the rural' in line with national and regional traditions obscured the fact that the countryside population was hardly homogenous. Julian Agyeman and Sarah Neal have emphasised that 'rural populations and places are fluidly and diversely constructed' and subject to frequent change, especially in border areas.[1] Indeed, aside from migrant rural labourers, rural areas across Central Europe were also home to ethnic minorities that affirmed the countryside not as the unchanging and intrinsically national space it was often presented as. Life at the rural margins across the region was diverse and malleable to change.[2] Despite its tight and remarkably consistent construction of the alpine landscape in art and visual culture, Austria's rural margins were no exception. Yet the ethnic and national minorities in the country's provinces, Czechs and Slovaks in Lower Austria, Slovenes in Styria, and Hungarians and Croats in the Burgenland, were represented in separate image worlds or rendered invisible entirely.[3] This would suggest that, from the right to the left of the political spectrum, Austrian rural-inspired art and visual culture were homogenous, at least when considering the rural iconography these images built on. However, there is a notable exception, which complicates this picture and adds a different perspective on interwar Austria's visual culture in a rural context: Roma and Sinti communities, whose presence emphasised the fluidity of the new national borders and the persistence of transnational lives in Central Europe's rural areas. At the same time, these communities were also presented as the least compatible with the region's new nation-states, featuring throughout as unfitting elements and as a threat to the livelihoods of rural populations 'proper'. Building on debates about the relationship between modern civilisation and 'primitive people', depictions of Roma communities concomitantly gave the countryside a different significance. Widely fashioned as 'quintessential strangers unable to socialise within established cultural models and perceived as an attack on the dominant society', the Roma held a specific position in the imagination of the Central European countryside, which presented the 'rural' as 'other'.[4]

Visualisations of ethnic difference and the debates surrounding them in the early twentieth century have tended to relate to the urban space as a location of global exchange and cosmopolitanism. Perhaps the best-known example of this is the popularity of Josephine Baker and the excitement – and outrage – her performances caused in Central Europe,

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-7

the exoticism tied to Jazz culture, visualised in paintings such as Bettina Bauer-Ehrlich's *Johnny spielt auf* (1928), as well as an interest in colonial exhibitions.[5] Indeed, 'blackness' as a concept of differentiation has long been positioned as a foreign aspect of Central European culture.[6] Aside from widely discussed constructions of Jewish difference, especially in the urban space, ethnic difference was thus predominantly visible through global exchange and served exotic fantasies.[7] Set as a part of urban modernity in the 1930s, ethnic and racial differences were used by reactionary factions to underline the threat to local customs and traditions.[8] The popularity of revue and Jazz culture, fused with Afro-American elements, caused a stir in Vienna since the mid-1920s, for example, leading to calls for censorship against the 'Jewish press' and its support of the 'over-estrangement of our folk culture'.[9] This is how the National Socialist newspaper *Deutschösterreichische Tageszeitung* attacked the premiere of Baker's performance at the Johann Strauß Theatre in the spring of 1928. Antisemitic and racist comments went hand in hand. Voiced by National Socialists and Christian Social supporters alike, they built on juxtapositions between the seductive 'foreign' dangers of the metropolis and the 'safe', traditional and national countryside.[10] Yet, while these calls reveal clearly that national and conservative culture was also at home in the city, little does it tell us that ethnic difference and processes of exoticisation also impacted images of the countryside. The representation of the Roma makes a point in case here. It shows that the exoticising tendencies of modernist culture and their construction as elements of 'difference' transformed the countryside from the 'familiar' to the 'strange'.[11] In contrast to the rural cultures discussed in this book in the previous chapters, which emphasised specific local conditions, 'gypsy' stereotypes were transnational, affirming a collective imagination of difference across all Habsburg successor states. Widely presented as 'foreign' in art and visual culture, Roma communities served ideas of finding a 'rural exotic' that was more accessible than distant travel locations, yet was no less perceived as distinct from hegemonic culture. Not least, such images affirmed a racialised divide between who 'belonged' and who did not, which was all the more visible in relation to the countryside than the urban space.[12] The depiction of the Roma in the visual arts had a long tradition in Central European culture. Yet until after the Second World War, it was almost exclusively through the lens of hegemonic society.[13] Taking this into account, this chapter stresses that the representation of minorities shaped rural-inspired art and visual culture, too, albeit in a different manner.[14] 'Gypsy' images were a genre that became popular in the late Habsburg Empire and, by the interwar years, had gained popular status as middle-brow art. Meanwhile, photographs emphasised the Roma's position as social outcasts in a much more threatening manner. In combination, these depictions not only affirmed the ostracisation of Roma communities in Central European culture, but they also added to a manifestation of what constituted the 'real' Austrian landscape: As will be shown, aligned with a view eastwards, 'gypsy' images affirmed the divide between a Slavic/exotic east and a German west in line with an ideological construction of specific geographic regions and their inhabitants.

The Roma as Central Europe's internal other

Roma communities lived across Central Europe in the interwar years. The largest settlements could be found in Czechoslovakia and Hungary at the rural peripheries of towns such as Szolnok in Hungary or Šariš in Slovakia.[15] Both countries counted approximately 100,000 registered citizens from different Romani groups. In Austria, the official number was much smaller, with a population of around 11,000, three-quarters of which lived in

the Burgenland.[16] The first Roma groups came to the province (then West Hungary) in the fifteenth century and were forced to settle in the eighteenth century.[17] Roma groups living across Austria after 1918, mainly from Sinti and Lovara communities, had arrived from the eastern parts of the Habsburg Empire, such as Slovakia, Subcarpathian Ruthenia, Hungary, and Romania in the previous centuries.[18] While many Sinti communities were fairground people or travelling performers, the Lovara predominantly worked as horse traders. Due to the economic crises in the early 1930s, many Roma communities were forced to work as peons and travel to find work.[19] Even though the same precarity of work and livelihood also affected others, when it came to Roma communities, social hardships quickly became racialised in a process that developed synchronically across Europe and took hold after 1918 in particular. Tilman Zülch has argued that the marked differentiation between Roma communities and the majority population rooted in processes of modernisation:

> Once upon a time, the Roma had a fixed place within the loose context of the waning feudal realms. Their lifestyle was a concrete alternative for some impoverished peasants and survived mercenary soldiers; in the production and circulation [of goods] in rural areas impoverished by wars and early industrialisation, their contribution was as significant as that of others outside the agricultural sector.[20]

By extension, economically weaker regions of Central Europe, such as the Burgenland, also were home to larger Roma populations – and effectively became places where conflicts and attempts at regulation became particularly visible.

The 1921 Czechoslovak census was the first to allow identification with a 'Gypsy nationality', a status claimed by just under 9,000 citizens.[21] Yet this 'Gypsy nationality' could hardly be compared to other identities on the national consensus: at the same time as this national denomination seemed to allow the community's participation in the modern state, debates on 'gypsy' communities in pedagogy, criminology, anthropology, and eugenics simultaneously enforced the institutionalisation of the Roma as a racialised Other. Social scientists such as Robert Ritter argued that Roma communities were fundamentally different from white society. Adopting a colonialist view on extra-European societies, Ritter, an influential German child psychologist, consequently emphasised the Roma's limited developmental capacities, arguing that they 'never grew out of childhood'.[22] As a result of such pseudo-scientific debates, Roma communities across Central Europe were subjected to lifestyle regulation, in which interventions into their life and culture were widely portrayed as 'civilising' efforts. The Czechoslovak 'Wandering Gypsies Law' was passed in 1927 and in force until 1950, for example, stipulating that anyone defined as a 'gypsy' 'could be placed at any time at the level of hardened criminal recidivists by the state authorities'.[23] The law also set out that children could be taken away from their parents for re-education. The definition 'gypsy' ('Zigeuner' in German) by this time not only included the Roma but was also used to refer to vagabonds, the unemployed, and prostitutes. Austria swiftly followed Czechoslovak regulations. Announcing an impending 'gypsy plague' from Czechoslovakia and Hungary with the presence of seasonal labourers, regional governments in the Burgenland and Lower Austria instigated calls to restrict movement for 'vagrants' and to establish special 'gypsy schools'.[24]

While regional governments across Austria's different provinces engaged in debates about the 'gypsy problem' by the mid-1920s, in the public eye, an emphasis of the Burgenland as the place where Roma communities lived was particularly noticeable.

Beyond the fact that Roma communities lived in larger permanent settlements there, there were also ideological reasons behind this. In the re-invention of postimperial Austria as a German alpine state, the Roma's presence in the Burgenland could be instrumentalised as a non-integratable Other, which affirmed the eastern part of the country as 'foreign', while affirming the 'real' Austria as represented by the alpine 'West'. The Alps, mainly in Tyrol and Vorarlberg, thus constituted the 'natural' environment for strong German rural communities and a natural barrier to 'foreign' influence.[25] By contrast, the flat Burgenland had a much more porous border and, as such, represented a more mixed society, not only in consideration of Roma minorities but also Hungarians and Croats, which challenged the image of rural Austria as homogenous, German-Catholic. Warnings of a 'gypsy majority' in the Burgenland became widespread in press reports from the mid-1920s, even though they never comprised more than 3% of the population.[26] Yet through such exaggerations, the Burgenland was effectively presented as a part of Austria that needed to be regulated more strongly to be integrated into the nation-state. As historian Thomas Leoni has put it: 'The Burgenland was the youngest and poorest of the Austrian Bundesländer [provinces]. It was characterised by under-developed infrastructure, little industry, and a predominantly agricultural economy. From the very beginning, it was considered the "stepson" of the Republic – and despite some efforts and partial successes, it could not improve its situation significantly in the interwar period'.[27]

In an article titled 'The gypsy problem in the Burgenland', the Viennese newspaper *Die Stunde* noted in June 1934, for example, that 'in the Alps, this question [the "gypsy question"] is a problem of policing, but two hour's drive from Vienna the "gypsies" are an economic problem that brings great sorrow to municipalities in the Burgenland'.[28] Based on the growing importance of the Alps as Austria's most significant landscape, economically viable through tourism and forming the basis for national culture, the Western regions were, considered to be in control of the situation, while the flat plains of the country's east were 'overrun' by negative influences from the 'East'. Indeed, *Die Stunde* notes about Roma settlements in the Burgenland province of Oberwart that 'only the house numbers attached to each of these "dwellings" remind one of Europe'.[29] Building on century-old stereotypes, interspersed with 'scientific' studies and a strong dose of folklore and mythmaking, the representation of the Roma gained heightened attention in parallel to the emphasis on the alpine landscape as Austria's 'national' geography.[30] That images played an essential role in this context is evident from the many illustrations, paintings, and photographs circulating in interwar Austria and Central Europe, which built on a long-established tradition of 'gypsy' painting.

Establishing a visual tradition: 'Gypsy' painting in the nineteenth century

Roma settlements could often be found as separate communities at the peripheries of small towns and villages. This marginalisation exacerbated social and racial stereotypes, mainly as outsiders had little insight into how the communities lived. Yet this outsider status also led to artists' growing engagement with Roma settlements as part of the Romanticist movements of the nineteenth century. Coding the rural landscape as a place of ethnic difference, their work affirmed a tradition in which the Roma were unequivocally shown as a rural people. The painters August von Pettenkofen (1822–1889) and Lajos Deák-Ébner (1850–1934), for example, spent prolonged periods each summer in Szolnok in the Hungarian Puszta landscape, where they painted 'gypsy' scenes.[31] Pettenkofen was a war correspondent for the Habsburg army during the revolutionary years of 1848–1849, at a time when artists, writers and poems supporting the Hungarian national movement began to

incorporate Romani figures into their narratives to such an extent that 'the amount of illustrated newspaper articles about the Roma people, for example, was much higher than the percentage of Roma people in society'.[32] Aligned with an understanding of the Roma as a group originating in the 'East', their representation afforded Hungarian national discourses a differentiated identity within the Habsburg Empire and quickly gained heightened visibility in print. For artists such as Pettenkofen, Roma settlements quite literally became a 'close exotic' at this point[33]: The art historian Dezső Rózsaffy called the Roma 'the Bedouin of the Great Plain' in a text referring to Pettenkofen's work, for example, while the artist Lajos Kunffy (1869–1962) noted that 'there is no need to travel great distances as you can paint figures like that [referring to drawings of people in India] in Hungary'.[34] By likening the Roma to non-European communities, artists thus contributed to a broader discourse that promoted Central Europe's geographic and social peripheries as a 'replacement' for travels further afield. Works such as *Hungarian Village Idyll* (1850s) (Figure 6.1) combined references to the Hungarian countryside with 'gypsy' stereotypes.

Figure 6.1 August von Pettenkofen. *Hungarian Village Idyll*, 1850/1860. Belvedere Gallery, Vienna. https://digital.belvedere.at/objects/6090/ungarische-dorfidylle

Showing a woman searching her half-clothed child's hair for lice in front of a small house with a straw roof, the painting presents a scene from 'everyday' village life. The bright clothes of the mother and child emphasise their dark hair and skin colour, while some blades of straw and simple tools in the foreground give the impression of an archaic yet idyllic life. As a part of Hungarian rural life, 'gypsies' in quaint genre paintings such as this one became an integral part of the eastern landscapes of the Habsburg Empire. Depicted as simple cottagers or nomadic people travelling in large groups with horses and carriages, they were used to add an orientalist flavour, becoming an eclectic, picturesque part of the imperial landscape.[35] Sociologist Éva Kovács has argued that such representations showed the Roma as 'pendants of the African and Asian "primitives" of Western Europe.'[36] Simultaneously, these paintings affirmed their position as part of the eastern and central European rural landscape and set them apart from society 'proper'. Within this tension, the Roma were turned into 'gypsy' stereotypes, which allowed orientalist and exoticising views of the countryside. Ethnographic images taken in the late Habsburg Empire affirm a similar practice. For example, a photograph of a Roma family (1899) by Engelbert Richter shows four adults and six children standing in front of a wooden house surrounded by a fence. As a study for painting used in the *Kronprinzenwerk* ('The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Word and Picture'), compiled by Crown Prince Rudolf, the photograph shows the family standing upright, facing the camera with serious facial expressions, wearing traditional dress. A sombre and detached portraiture style helps to emphasise the scene as an ethnographic record of a pre-modern society, drawing attention to the family's dark skin tone, the men's long hair, the women's rich jewellery and the children's ragged clothes. Even though the image refers to a specific location with reference to Wulewa in the Bukovina region, the depiction of the Roma in this manner was typical throughout the Habsburg Empire and its successor states. Offering an ethnographic counterpart to Romantic genre paintings, such 'scientific' images of Roma communities were not only a part of survey studies but also circulated on postcards, altogether offering an easily decodable and coherent image of 'the gypsy' in the central European art and visual culture.[37] Indeed, while specific locations, such as Szolnok, gained popularity among artists precisely because of their Roma populations, few distinctions were made visually in terms of place specificity: considered nomadic people, the Roma defined the countryside as a place of freedom and unrestraint. In other words, because Roma communities were heavily stereotyped, their depiction as part of the rural imaginary simultaneously responded to their criminalisation and the romanticisation of their lifestyle. Individuals played only a marginal role. In combination, ethnographic and genre images in different media unified the view of Roma communities as an exotic Other within Central European society.

Continuing Pettenkofen's legacy: Hans Larwin's 'Beautiful gypsy'

As the example of Pettenkofen's work indicates, images of the Roma were already well established as a part of Central European art and visual culture in the first half of the twentieth century.[38] Their popularity hardly diminished after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire either. Instead, Roma representations in line with the countryside as a marginal and 'exotic' place increased in different ways while also maintaining links to established traditions. Modernist artists drew on Roma stereotypes to forge a local primitivist art. Newspapers, magazines, and press reports, meanwhile, affirmed

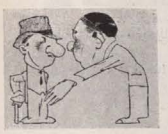
views of the Roma as criminal and 'primitive', living in huts or caravans at the rural peripheries.[39] All the while, genre paintings continued to circulate, building on established stereotypes in a mass market. Particularly noteworthy throughout these different modes of representation was the continuity between them: while Roma men were portrayed as virtuous musicians yet lazy and work-shy, young Roma women and girls were often eroticised as prostitutes or seductresses with quasi-magical powers, building on the interdependency of 'sexual and geopolitical chauvinism familiar from "orientalist" "primitive" female principles' of non-European cultures.[40] 'Gypsy' stereotypes thus became a 'time-tested construct' that 'allowed the instant wrapping of the indigenous "other" – with the difference that "indigeneity" in this context was presented as a foreign element of local "national" cultures'.[41]

In September 1935, the illustrated magazine *Die Muskete* published a photograph of *The Beautiful Gypsy* (Figure 6.2) by the Viennese painter Hans Larwin (1873–1938). The work is strikingly realistic, showing a young Roma girl standing upright in a richly embroidered dress with braided hair and delicate necklaces and rings. She avoids the viewer's gaze, looking proud and absent. Overall, she is framed as a 'type', confirmed by the image's short description, noting 'a type, which the painter Hans Larwin has eternalised in many of his works'.[42] Dry as the description is, it is equally disturbing: quite clearly, the painting shows a young girl with child-like features, yet the description seems to refer to a woman. Indeed, looking at the wider presentation of the image within the page design, the girl's view is directed at an erotic cartoon to the right of the image, in which a semi-dressed woman jokes about the fast advances of her lover. Even though the pictures bear no relation to each other aside from featuring on the same page, the positioning of the images draws a connection guided by the girl's gaze. In her analysis of Roma depictions in modern art, Kovács has argued that the Roma body was widely used to imply sexuality.[43] She compares this to black bodies in paintings such as Édouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863), in which the model's position as a prostitute is affirmed by her black maid in the background.[44] Even though the connection between the cartoon and the painting in *Die Muskete* is not as explicit, their positioning allows an interpretation along the same lines, especially when considering Larwin's work on Roma subjects more broadly. He painted images of breastfeeding Roma women (Figure 6.3), for example, who lay sprawled out in the hay, resembling more an eroticised pose than the image of a nurturing mother. Featuring in popular advertising, cigarette brands such as *Cigane*, as well as diverse aspects of entertainment culture, most famous through figures such as George Bizet's Carmen or Victor Hugo's Esmeralda, the 'beautiful gypsy' stereotype had long become established as an enticing figure, which was rarely associated with the actual Roma living in Central Europe. By extension, the 'famous type' represented in Larwin's painting in *Die Bühne* would easily be understood within the connotations of a sexually available female Other cultivated in the preceding decades.[45]

Art historian Hans Bisanz described Larwin's work in a 1989 exhibition catalogue as bearing 'the special gift of capturing the sad beauty of human sub-cultures (…) not from a superior but from an equal point of view'.[46] Bisanz thus presented the artist as someone sympathetic to marginalised people, who dedicated much of his work to the depiction of social outcasts. Born in the same generation as Gustav Klimt, Larwin today has fallen into oblivion, which Bisanz explained with the fact that he worked 'entirely in opposition to the leading artists of the Klimt group of

zu interessieren, im selben Maße, als diese Umgebung sich für sie zu interessieren aufhörte.
Onkel Theodor, der wieder einmal zufällig mit Klara zusammenkam, sagte:
„Liebe Klara, du gibst dich deinem guten Herzen zu sehr hin, Rosa gehört zu den Leuten, die kein Gefühl besitzen für die Güte, die man ihnen entgegenbringt. Du hast auf die Baronin einen vorzüglichen Eindruck gemacht und ich will dich gerne bei ihr einführen."
Und nun kamen die Tage, wo das Tränenkrüglein völlig leer war. Tante Betti, die es als erste konstatierte, bekam einen hysterischen Anfall und gebärdete sich, als sei es ihre (Tante Bettis) Tochter, die sie (Tante Betti) vergessen hatte.
Rosa mußte sich zu ihr setzen und sie trösten.
Klara zeigte sich selten und die Begrüßung fiel dann ziemlich fremd aus. Rosa aber schien die allgemeine Kälte nicht zu merken, und wenn sie das leere Krügelchen ihrer Tochter sah, dann vergoß sie zwar einige Tränen — aber mehr aus Freude.
Trafen sich die Angehörigen der Familie Elsner, so vermieden sie es, das peinliche Thema zu berühren — sie sahen sich an und seufzten.
Bloß Onkel Theodor sagte:
„Kinder, man läßt sich nicht hinreißen — ins Armenviertel geht man nicht, man erlebt nur Enttäuschungen."
Und so war Rosa bald vereinsamt. Allmitternächtlich saß sie auf ihrem schlichten Grabstein und beobachtete mit Freude und ein ganz klein wenig Sentimentalität die Anzeichen einer beginnenden Verwahrlosung ihrer Ruhestätte. Und dann setzte sich ihr alter Nachbar, der armselige Magistratsbeamte, zu ihr und zündete sich sein Pfeifchen an.
Sie schwiegen.
Aber ihre Seelen begannen zu sprechen und erzählten sich die wunderschönsten Dinge.

Die schöne Zigeunerin
Ein Typus, den Maler Hans Larwin in vielen seiner Werke verewigt hat



„Sie schreiben über meine Oper eine Rezension und haben sie gar nicht gesehen."
„Ja, was glauben Sie, ich lasse mich in meinem Urteil beeinflussen?"

„Für einen Mann mit ernsten Absichten gehen Sie etwas zu stürmisch vor."
„Ja, ich fasse meine ernsten Absichten eben sehr schnell!"

Figure 6.2 Hans Larwin. *The Beautiful Gypsy*. Printed in *Die Muskete* (12 September 1935), 6. Austrian National Library, Vienna. https://anno.onb.ac.at

Figure 6.3 Hans Larwin. *Gypsy with Her Two Children*, before 1929. Wiki Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_Larwin_-_Zigeunerinnen_mit_ihren_zwei_Kindern.jpg

the Vienna Secession, with their precious art that was set to appeal to society's upper classes'.[47] In contrast to Klimt, Larwin can be described as an artist of the middle-brow who specialised in quaint genre scenes on the one hand and social portraits of war veterans and people living at the margins of society on the other. His work was highly popular, reprinted frequently, and circulated on postcards, in music books, and illustrated magazines, giving it high visibility beyond the official channels of Vienna's art establishment. As *The Beautiful Gypsy* already indicates, Larwin's preference for social margins also had a strong ethnic angle: letters from the 1910s, already give evidence of requests by female clients ordering 'gypsy' paintings.[48] By the 1920s, images of Roma figures had become Larwin's trademark. While his work was remarkably unchanging in style throughout his career, Larwin's specialisation thus helped him to a particular position in the interwar Austrian art scene. Given his preferred subject matter and style choice, Larwin did not stand in high regard among Vienna's academic artistic circles after 1918. In his obituary, written in September 1938, comments on his work refer to his 'idiosyncratic use of brown colours' and a 'dramatic, indeed captivating expression', remembering him as an excellent social observer rather than a talented artist.[49] Earlier, in 1930, Larwin's professorship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna was contested publicly by the modernist artists of the *Kunstschau* group, fearing that

his appointment would lead to the 'provincialisation' of the Academy, seeing him as a threat to 'the modern understanding of art at the academy'.[50]

Larwin's work showed remarkable consistency from the turn of the twentieth century until his death, defying any sense of teleological progress that art historical narratives traditionally insist upon.[51] His genre paintings, in particular, were set to evoke 'the good old times' on different levels: on the one hand, his depictions framed non-white rural communities as a glimpse into a pre-modern world. On the other hand, his references to nineteenth-century painting traditions, such as Pettenkofen's work, evoked a sense of Habsburg nostalgia. Thus, his paintings were governed by a sense of continuity in style and subject matter, reinforced by focusing on marginalised groups and geographic peripheries. The continuity and popularity of Larwin's work thus brought forth a different kind of focus in Viennese interwar art, which formed an essential part of modernity in the first half of the twentieth century and found strong connections to the countryside: nostalgia.[52] In order to serve such views for popular tastes, Larwin constructed a colonial gaze that pertained both to rural areas and ethnic minorities in Central Europe, using archaic settings as a leveller. While his photographic realism, as in *Beautiful Gypsy*, sought to secure the artist's intimate knowledge and engagement with the Roma in the public eye, his limited idealising scenes reduced them to a set of stereotypes that affirmed a comprehensible image to popular (white) audiences. Building on ideas of freedom and the nostalgia of a place lost in time through references to works such as Pettenkofen's of Szolnok, Larwin produced 'typical' renderings of suburbs and rural areas that were inhabited by people living at the margins of society.

Larwin's 'gypsy' images often take close-up viewpoints and rarely disclose any specific locations. Yet their presumed location can be deducted from the similarity to Pettenkofen's works beyond mere visual semblance: from 1919 to 1921, Larwin travelled extensively in Yugoslavia and Hungary, including Szolnok, where he lived with Roma communities.[53] The artist thus affirmed established locations in the 'East' as places with a Roma presence, which also gained local significance through associations with the Burgenland and Hungarian rule. Even though Szolnok was much further located to the east of interwar Hungary, the fact that Austria's youngest province had been a part of Hungary until not long ago bridged the imaginary gaps between the local and external 'exotic'. Indeed, as early as 1926, an anonymous policeman in a local newspaper noted that 'it is little wonder that given the great number of Hungarian gypsies, the new province of the Burgenland also gained a number so high it can hardly bear them'.[54] While socialist papers were more sympathetic, they, too, presented the Roma as an 'uncivilised people' from the east who needed to be 're-educated' to become part of Austrian society.[55] Circulating at the same time as newspaper reports about the growing number of Roma in the Burgenland, Larwin's unchanging 'gypsy' types affirmed sensationalist news items.[56] The social realism with mass appeal that Larwin constructed in his paintings thus drew on a host of links between past and present, proximity and distance, in which the Roma represented the margins of the Central European rural imaginary.

Serving local primitivism: Bohemians and modern art

Aside from the continuation of established painting traditions that affirmed Roma communities as archaic societies outside modern time, avant-garde and modernist artists also sought them out in search of new ways of visual expression and to carve out an image for themselves that set them apart from hegemonic society. Avant-garde studies

scholar Mike Sell has shown that artists who presented themselves as 'Bohemian' began to visit Roma communities in the nineteenth century, appropriating romanticisations of the 'travelling gypsy' stereotype to present themselves as free-spirited outsiders.[57] Indeed, while the term 'Bohemian/Bohéme' originally referred to Roma communities, it was quickly adopted by artists seeking to market themselves as different from the establishment. Similarly, Klaus-Michael Bogdal has argued that the 'gypsy idyll' in the nineteenth century was a fantasy to break out from bourgeois conventions.[58] Partly, artists' fascination with Roma culture rested upon a highly romanticised equation between the artist as a 'Bohemian' who rebelled against the norms of a bourgeois lifestyle and the 'gypsy' as a rebellious spirit.[59] In the early twentieth century, this amounted to a strategy of modernist artists in which, instead of travelling to distant extra-European locations, they focused on Roma communities in Central Europe's rural peripheries to construct visions of a close-by exotic. Perhaps the best-known example for this is the German artist Otto Müller (1874–1930), a member of the expressionist group *Die Brücke* in the 1910s, who settled in Breslau/Wrocław after 1919, where he taught at the Academy of Applied Arts. Müller used the summer months to travel extensively in eastern and south-eastern Europe, spending several weeks in locations such as Szolnok, where he lived with Roma communities, even claiming (now disproven) 'gypsy heritage' himself.[60] In 1928, the artist published a series of lithographs titled the *Gypsy Album*. The image compositions are striking: showing lush natural environments, horse-drawn carriages and makeshift shacks, frequently populated by half-dressed young girls with black hair and dark skin colour, Müller's album affirms the Roma as a truly 'exotic' community in the European imaginary, locating them in unidentified rural locations. Affirming this primitivist construction in a bright expressionist style, the *Gypsy Album* became part of the culture of modernist primitivism while simultaneously affirming the Roma as a non-European society. 'Gypsy' stereotypes thus allowed the transformation of the central European countryside into an exotic location, fulfilling all the stereotypes of 'uncivilised' societies. Despite the visual shift between Larwin and Pettenkofen's and Müller's rendering of these scenes, their content was remarkably unchanging. Both added to the presentation of the Roma as 'frozen in time', which was wholly in keeping with hegemonic ideas about the countryside yet simultaneously detached from notions of the rural as a national landscape.

Müller's *Gypsy Album* is only one example of a Central European variant of primitivism that built on 'gypsy' stereotypes as a well-established trope. Indeed, even artists with a generally more socio-critical perspective perpetuated a similar model of a 'gypsy exotic'. This includes the Slovak painters Josef Bendík (1903–1989) and Imro Weiner-Král (1901–1978), for example, as well as works by Milada Marešová (1901–1987), Ernst Neuschul (1895–1968), and Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1898–1944), who were all known for their leftist political engagement. In Dicker-Brandeis' *Gypsy Woman with Child* (1937–1938), a sense of worry is written on the nursing mother's face. Yet the overall image composition, showing a woman in bright clothes, one breast exposed, sitting in a dark forest to nurse her child, draws on familiar stereotypes of Roma women, which continuously segregated the Roma from hegemonic society in rural contexts. In Weiner-Král's *Village Fair in Považská Bystrica* (1928), an elderly Roma woman features with her back turned to the viewer.[61] Wearing a richly ornamented coat and heavy gold earrings, she is conversing with a group of people in Slovak folk costumes, a deck of cards on the table in front of her. A large parrot watches the scene to her left, reinforcing the stark contrast between its dark-skinned, ornamented companion and the villagers

surrounding her stall. Even though the figures feature in a shared scene, viewers are confronted with an encounter between two different cultures. Factually, all the figures might well have originated in the same village or town. And yet, the figure of the old fortune teller introduces a sense of difference, which affirms a clear distinction between the 'native' Slovak villagers and the Romani Other. Not least, the setting of the village fair implies a travelling event, which promises a sense of the extraordinary that the fortune teller implicitly embodies. In light of Weiner-Král's position as a young Slovak avant-garde painter who had just returned from Paris, *Village Fair* can be understood as a rendering of the modernist fascination with cabaret, dance, and fairground culture in a rural setting.[62] As in Müller's lithographs, the Roma figure adds an orientalist element to the work and presents magic and mythmaking as part of popular entertainment. Decisively set apart from modernity, their presence was intrinsically tied to a rural, marginal environment and archaic living structures.

Figure 6.4 Jozef Bendík. *Gypsy Idyll*, 1938. Collection of the East Slovak Gallery, Košice.

In Bendík's *Gypsy Idyll* (Figure 6.4), a family rests in a bright rural setting. Both adult figures correspond to prevalent 'gypsy' stereotypes – the man as a violinist and the woman as an exoticised beauty with dark skin. The woman's breast is exposed as she nurses a naked child. Her position, again, implies sexual availability, concurrent to the limited roles in which Roma women were cast with frequent references to 'wild marriages' early sexual maturity and multiple partners as commonplace among Roma communities.[63] At a time when debates about the integrability of Roma communities into the region's new nation-states reached new heights with debates surrounding 'civilising efforts', this form of exoticism thus reinforced – rather than challenged – formulations of the community's incompatibility with modern society. A small but significant cue for this in the painting is the town remotely visible in the background, which firmly places the Roma family outside it in a pastoral rural setting. Significantly, such an alignment between 'the rural' and 'timelessness' recalls colonising powers' positioning of indigenous cultures as standing outside linear time. Termed the 'denial of coevalness' by anthropologist Johannes Fabian, the institutionalisation of linear time by 'civilised' culture defined different ways of living as anachronistic and legitimised its superiority over it.[64] As dark-skinned figures living in nature, the Roma family in Bendík's painting features as a group that is living 'anachronistically' to the modern central European civilisation visible in the background, at once upholding Bohemian ideas of a music-loving, free-spirited people and affirming their wholly segregated position. Similarly, in *Gypsy Camp* (1936), a painting by the Viennese artist Max Frey (1902–1955), style and content convey an image of a rural idyll with the depiction of a Roma family resting in the forest. The work is finished in rough brushstrokes, showing the outlines of a group of figures next to a horse-drawn carriage. The scene is surrounded by lush greenery, while in a far back, the outline of a town is just in sight. Like Bendík's image, the scene of the rural 'gypsy idyll' is set in visible distance from modern society. The shorthand style indicates that Frey focused on a motif so well known it needed little specific reference, while the expressive, broad brushstrokes affirm the primitivist setting of the scene. Indeed, comparing the stylistic features of works by Müller, Weiner-Král and Frey, it becomes apparent that 'gypsy' scenes were affirmed as 'exotic' settings through their rendition in a bright expressionist or primitivist visual language. Not least, this draws attention to a transnational approach to rural modernism, which built on unanimous stereotypes of the Roma as a travelling 'free' people living in nature, simultaneously separating them from modern society and serving artists' self-construction as non-conforming 'Bohemians' alike.

'Gypsies are very topical': Roma as rural outcasts in interwar visual culture

While 'gypsy paintings' often constructed Roma as nomadic people in highly idealised terms, a different yet just as pervasive set of stereotypes circulated in illustrated magazines and press reports. At the intersection of ethnographic documentary and criminal reports, these popular images added a further layer to the presentation of the community's incompatibility with Central Europe's national cultures. Abandoned to the margins of society, the association of the Roma with rural and marginal locations was presented as a condition of their 'foreignness'. Ranging from accusations of cannibalism and murder to petty theft and prostitution, sensationalist reports in the late 1920s and 1930s emphasised their fundamental difference from 'modern' civilisation, using

the same kind of terminology and visual language that was also applied to narratives about non-European peoples in travel reports.[65] Despite the many articles that were published on the topic from the late 1920s onwards, when the criminalisation of the Roma was manifested through announcements of a 'Gypsy plague', the content of these contributions is remarkably coherent. Photographs played an essential role in this. Mixing ethnographic portraits and reportage images of social desolation, different image strategies affirmed a 'realistic' view of Roma life which corresponded with many of the visual stereotypes perpetuated in the fine arts yet framed them in a decidedly more negative light. Moving from an abstracted idea of the 'gypsy' to documentary images, Roma representation in popular visual culture played a vicious game of realism, which consistently reaffirmed the community's incompatibility with modern society. Public media campaigns against the Roma, thinly disguised as ethnographic reports about an 'unknown' society, affirmed 'gypsies' as a problem in Austrian society, especially in its rural margins. Thus, while popular visual culture often constructed rural areas as an idealised space, in reference to Roma communities, its associations took on a more sinister image, particularly in times of social and economic insecurity, both on a national and a regional level.

'Gypsies are very topical, but unfortunately, their topicality is not related to good things'.[66] This is how a photo essay by Max Fenichel in *Die Bühne* (Figure 6.5) addresses the arrival of nomadic Roma groups in Austria in 1928. Presented in an entertainment magazine, the essay is half-serious, half tongue-in-cheek, giving a 'historical outline' of Roma communities in Europe while drawing clear distinctions between 'local' societies and the 'travellers'. Particularly notable in the text is an emphasis on cultural representation, drawing attention to stereotypes of musicality with reference to popular operettas and 'gypsy music', presented as a Central European version on Jazz, originating in Hungary. Yet in the final passage, these stereotypes are done away with the sentence: 'The business with Romanticism now is also passé for the Gypsies that passed undetected for decades, simply because the halo of Romanticism surrounded them'.[67] Published at the same time as local newspapers in Burgenland spread the news about an unprecedented number of Roma families harassing villages and farmers, the text draws a line between an idealised 'gypsy' image in cultural representation and the current situation. Although the text replicates many centuries-old stereotypes throughout, it seeks to cut the link between the past and the present as a time of modernity, in which superstitious myth-making no longer has a place. Yet it does so through the affirmation of negative stereotypes such as nomadism, theft and vagrancy, which are positioned as the 'real' representation of 'gypsies'. The photographs illustrating the text are a collage of images spread across the two pages. They show a violin maker, a child in ragged clothes looking at a violin, and Roma families in front of make-shift dwellings and painted caravans. The apparent dissolving of national borders regarding the Roma's 'omnipresence' in European culture is affirmed through these vehicles, supporting the presentation of their owners as unfit for modern society while suggesting that 'gypsies' are 'everywhere'. The captions indicate that the photographs were taken in different places, including Poland and Austria, yet the individuals portrayed remain unknown, even though one of the captions addresses the election of a 'gypsy king' in Poland, showing Janusz Dwiek with his family. He remains unnamed.[68] The photographic subjects exist either in line with their professions or as a clan-like group, with women in long, bright skirts and braided hair and children half-dressed and dishevelled.

DIE BÜHNE

In der Nähe Warschaus domizilieren eine große Anzahl von Zigeunerstämmen, welche gleichsam einen Staat unter sich bilden, und da ist es nicht verwunderlich, wenn diese sich aus ihrer Mitte eine Persönlichkeit wählen, die gewissermaßen das Oberhaupt der einzelnen Stämme bildet und die Fäden der Organisationen spinnt. So residiert in der Stadt Seilbosch ein Zigeuner mit seiner Familie, der von über 20.000 Zigeunern zum König gewählt und bezeichnet wird. Dieser Zigeunerkönig überreichte dem Reichskommissär in Warschau eine Adresse mit der Unterschrift von 20.000 Zigeunern, die ihn zum König gewählt haben und ihre Treue dem polnischen Staat versicherten. Der Zigeunerkönig mit seiner Familie. (Cesanek.)

Die Zigeuner sind da!

Die Zigeuner sind jetzt aktuell, aber ihre Aktualität steht leider nicht mit angenehmen Dingen im Zusammenhang. Man will sie aus Wien vertreiben, weil sie hier allerlei Unheil anstiften. Es heißt, sie sollen ein Kind entführt haben, das seither nicht auffindbar ist. Die heutigen Zigeuner sind leider nicht mehr von Nikolaus Lenau, ihre Romantik ist dahin und die Wirklichkeit ihres Lebens sieht nach Schmutz, Unordnung und auch Gefahr aus. Die Legende war seit jeher um den Zigeuner, bald in gefälligem, bald in drohendem Sinn, man sagte ihm Hexerei, Dämonie, Kinderdiebstahl usw. nach und die Zigeuner sind seit jeher der gesitteten Welt ein Nomadenvolk gewesen, von dem man lieber die Finger läßt. Sie haben die Sagen von ihren Zauberkünsten vielfach benützt, Leichtgläubige mit ihren Produktionen zu fangen und die Wahrsagekunst ihrer Weiber ist nicht nur aus dem „Troubadour" von Verdi bekannt.

Das Sympathische an den Zigeunern ist ihre eminente Musikalität, die Melodien, die sie produzieren, angeblich ohne je eine Note gekannt zu haben. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Zigeunern und der ungarischen Tief-

Der Geigenmacher. (Photo Fenichel.)

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Figure 6.5 'Die Zigeuner sind da!' *Die Bühne* 201 (1928), 24–25. Austrian National Library, Vienna. https://anno.onb.ac.at/

Both the narrative of the 'gypsy king' and the images resemble ethnographic reports of non-European cultures, interspersed with racial slurs and anecdotes of social deprivation. In contrast to the idealising images of modernist artists, therefore, the illustrated press encouraged the racialisation of Roma groups, presenting them as a general 'problem' across Central Europe. In many ways, this shift recalls the treatment of the region's Jewish populations, too, particularly in the reactionary political environment of the 1930s.[69] Yet while the central European Jewish population was much more diversified as a consequence of the emancipation processes of the nineteenth century, the Roma still, by and large, had little public representation beyond stereotypes. Rural and suburban areas played a significant role in this context as their primary living space, marking their status as political and social outsiders, which popular magazines could exploit easily by drawing on visual contrasts between urban modernity and rural 'backwardness'. A haunting example for this is an article by Josef R. Harrer (Figure 6.6) from the *Wiener Illustrierte* (1933), which introduces 'Gypsies in the Twentieth Century'.[70] The same article was reprinted in the Prague-German women's magazine *Frauenfreude – Mädchenglück*, emphasising the construction of a coherent image of the Roma across Central Europe.[71] Considering that the articles were published in the same year as a federal meeting in Oberwart, Burgenland, concluded with the words that the goal was to 'free the Germanic peasant from a parasite' in reference to the town's Roma population, the report gains particularly sinister undertones, both concerning its text and images.[72]

Although they are printed on the same page, the images, by an author signing simply as C.C.C., and the text work independently, allowing readers to follow the photographic essay without reading the essay. The photographs are, thus, used to convey the message as simply as possible, making use of 'humorous' and 'informative' captions about Roma communities' turn towards motorised vehicles. Yet, as is explained, this modernisation is not a positive one, for it is presented as a consequence of the Roma's shyness to work, leading them to abuse modern technology to continue their 'lazy lifestyles'.[73] Pictures of young children on the open road suggest that they are kept dishevelled on purpose to afford their elders' motorised lifestyle. Meanwhile, a comment on the patriarchal social structures in Roma societies is supported by an image of a group of women sewing to show traditional labour division, emphasising that modernisation only referred to a mode of transport, not a lifestyle. Throughout, the text builds the crudest stereotypes, while the documentary style of the photographs asserts a sense of realism that appears to confirm their veracity. Inserted into a broader visual culture in which Romani people had a consistently stereotyped presence, the juxtaposition between 'modern' and 'gypsy' is drawn into the grotesque here. The peripheral settings of the photographs, including the outskirts of towns and the countryside, support the framing of this message. Enforcing the notion of rural areas as a liminal space that was outside regulations of modern life, the presence of Roma communities in the margins of Austrian society was presented at once as a matter that needed to be controlled by modern state legislation while also emphasising the vulnerability of rural farming populations that represented the backbone of state ideology at the time. Where the exoticisation of the countryside through Roma images in the fine arts served the needs of artists for differentiation, in popular culture, a related rhetoric took on much more threatening dimensions, culminating the Romani genocide during the Second World War.[74] In Oberwart, the first deportations occurred just months after Austria's annexation to the Third Reich in March 1938. Less than 1,000 Burgenland Roma survived the National Socialist period.

Zigeuner

Zigeuner des 20. Jahrhunderts fahren mit ihrem eigenen Auto, das sie bei jeder Rast auskühlen lassen. Für alle Fälle besitzen sie aber auch ein Fahrrad, um für kurze Wege Benzin zu sparen

Jedes Zigeunerauto hat mer, die allerdings der von ihr in Evi-

Von Dr. Josef R. Harrer

Wer kennt sie nicht, die schlanken, sehnigen Leute mit ihrer gelbbraunen Hautfarbe, ihrem länglichen Schädel, ihren schwarzen Haaren, diese mittelgroßen Gestalten, die plötzlich am Rande der Stadt, des Dorfes auftauchen und manchem, der von ihrer geringen Achtung fremden Eigentums gehört hat, Angst einjagen!

Wer kennt nicht die Mädchen der Zigeuner mit ihren glutvollen Augen, mit ihrer Liebe, der Mitwelt die Zukunft aus der Hand und aus den Karten zu lesen! Merimées Novelle von der rassigen „Carmen", durch Bizets Oper aller Welt bekannt, hat viel dazu beigetragen, auch dem Volk der Zigeuner den Reiz falscher Romantik zu geben.

Und doch hat diese dichterische, musikalische Gehobenheit den Zigeunern eigentlich nicht viel genützt. Der Engländer sieht sich vor, wenn er das Wort „Gibsy" hört; der Spanier wird miß-

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Figure 6.6 Josef R. Harrer, 'Zigeuner des 20. Jahrhunderts', *Wiener Magazin* (August 1933), 22. Austrian National Library, Vienna. https://anno.onb.ac.at/

The countryside as a place of alterity

Roma communities not only represented a highly recognisable stereotyped group in Central European interwar art and visual culture but also gave a particular interpretation to rural areas that markedly differed from representations of the countryside as a national space. On the one hand, modernist artists employed a view of difference with 'gypsy' images to mark their presence as 'Bohemian' outsiders. On the other hand, painters such as Larwin forged nostalgic images that positioned them as realists building on visual connections to a generation of Romanticist Habsburg painters. In both cases, the Roma's presence in the countryside was shown as exotic, adopting orientalist viewpoints. While specific locations, such as Szolnok, were long-established sites for artists' encounters with Roma communities, the resulting images reinforced a non-specificity of place, which not only presented the countryside in central Europe's margins as a place of 'exotic' encounters but also affirmed the place of the Roma to be outside modern civilisation. While romanticised stereotypes in the fine arts enforced rural nostalgia with such images, the illustrated press of the 1920s and 1930s built on them to construct images of the Roma as a 'criminal' and 'primitive' people with a lasting presence.[75] The countryside setting as a place of alterity played a central role in this construction. As Habiba Hadziavdic and Hilde Hoffmann have argued about 'gypsy' stereotypes in film, 'just as specific sites and places function as "ethnic" markers by extension, the access to imagined spaces like "home" or "nation" is denied to Roma'.[76] This approach is evident in the construction of the 'gypsy countryside', functioning on multiple levels. Daily newspapers and criminological magazines expressly referred to the 'gypsy problem' in the country's east as an out-of-control situation, attaching this issue to a specific region (the Burgenland) whose demographic was owed to its history under Hungarian dominion. At the same time, reports and photographs in popular magazines placed the 'gypsy issue' into a broader transnational context, positioning the Roma as a 'problem' in European culture at large. This is affirmed by the remarkable similarity in the construction of related images in the region, which employ ethnographic and documentary strategies for compositions that manifest Roma's place 'as quintessential strangers unable to socialise within established cultural models and perceived as an attack on the dominant society'.[77] By rendering the countryside of the Roma as a 'timeless and placeless' environment, a different side of the Central European countryside thus came to the fore: one that was 'foreign', threatening, even, and could be simultaneously close and distant, transnational and regional to ostracise a segment of the population.

Notes

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Conclusion

The Interwar Years as an Age of Provincial Rule[1]

In a letter sent to his brother during the preparations for the large-scale alpine photomontage of the Austrian pavilion at the Paris World's Fair in spring 1937, Robert Haas noted: 'A lot is entirely wrong, with parts moved from left to right, copied the other way round etc., but altogether a good impression.'[2] Haas referred to the complex process of assembling the montage, yet his comment strikes with the construction of rural modernism in interwar Austria on a larger scale. Combining different alpine landscapes with the presence of tourism through busses, cars, and a plethora of alpine flowers in the foreground, the photomontage is a stand-in for the complex dynamics that constituted modern art and visual culture in a rural setting. It makes clear that there was no 'natural' landscape as such. Instead, rural elements were consistently remodelled, shaped and reinterpreted in line with the needs of its predominantly urban creators. As an *ars combinatoria* with photographs provided by official channels, combined by an artist of high standing yet who was already erased at this time for his Jewish heritage, the work and its wider context underline that, persuasive as it was, the image of the simple idyllic Austrian countryside was highly deceptive.

The rapid consolidation of regional identities in historically strong provinces such as Salzburg and Tyrol allowed the construction of Austria as a picturesque alpine state. They quickly responded to the quest for cultural re-innovation in the arts after 1918, while visualising a comprehensible set of features that came to define the postimperial state. The references to the rural landscape and the traditions embedded within it thereby recall Peter Vandereest's comment on the intrinsic connection between the 'rural' and modern state identities, that 'the link between rurality and the nation is indicated by the dual meaning of the word "country": rural areas and nation'.[3] As 'pre-modern structures' which had consolidated long before the idea of the nation-state, regions represented entities that artists could draw on as a model for the consolidation of identities in times of social and political instability.[4] Yet despite this strong presence of the countryside in art and visual culture, a key feature of its construction remained their embeddedness in the urban imagination. Connections between rurality and urbanity were intrinsic to modernism beyond the metropolis because its formation relied on urban cultural figures and was produced for urban consumption. This affirms conceptualisations of the rural as

> a significant imaginative space, connected with all kinds of cultural meanings ranging from the idyllic to the oppressive, and as a material object of lifestyle desire for some people – a place to move to, farm in, visit for a vacation, encounter different forms of nature, and generally practise alternatives to the city.[5]

DOI: 10.4324/9781032658865-8

As an imaginative space captured in painting, photography or popular graphic arts, images of the countryside catered to the urban imagination, leaving little room for perceptions of rural inhabitants. This imbalance was as true in the case of 'regional' artists such as Walde, who were trained in Vienna and made their name through contacts to cosmopolitan circles, as it was evident in the rural fantasies forged by young women holidaying in the Salzkammergut, as well as the amateur photographers, left and right to the political spectrum, who went out on the 'hunt' for their ideal image. Images of rural spaces were always contingent on encounters with urbanites and represented a model that could be idealised and amended, rather than showing in-depth engagement. Nowhere is this more evident than in the simultaneous construction of the rural as a place of national *Heimat* and an exotic 'no place' in reference to subaltern minorities. This contradiction not only emphasises that as political views radicalised in the 1930s, so did the rural fantasies they built on, but it also shows that in its different projections, the countryside was never 'neutral'.

By the early 1930s, if not explicitly referring to Vienna, 'Austrian' quickly meant 'rural' and 'alpine'. The countryside and smaller towns close to picturesque landscapes became an intrinsic part of modern, post-imperial Austrian national and state identity. Even though rural elements of culture played an essential role in other Habsburg successor states, too, the ubiquitous image of the alpine landscape thus gave Austria's connection to 'the rural' an exceptionally high significance. The interwar years were 'the age of provincial rule'.[6]

Throughout, the establishing of 'the rural' as a cornerstone of Austrian visual identity developed continuously and already had a strong presence before the Austrofascist regime reinforced this image in national and international propaganda efforts. This is often overlooked since regionalism was long seen as 'an ideological forerunner of fascism and a negative, backwards-looking force'.[7] Yet even though the regime, in particular, endorsed regionalism and rural culture, the impact of the 'rural' went far beyond official and reactionary channels. Featuring in the work of artists from different backgrounds and in different contexts – one only needs to mention the playful visions of the Salzkammergut by young Jewish women artists – they also corresponded with a cosmopolitan vision, which depicted the countryside as a fashionable, 'modern' place. Additionally, the political Left attempted to draw out the flaws of this 'rural idyll' by drawing attention to the economic hardships of rural citizens, even though this often jarred with idealised rural images that formed the core of their very own base of amateur photographers. The difficulty in establishing a critical image of the countryside, in this case, underlines that the rural idyll was a pervasive concept that crossed all social and political boundaries.

In its different facets, rural modernism transpired as a complex of elements that uniquely disseminated modern rural culture as a highly visible phenomenon across social and political factions, making it difficult to decipher the ideological dynamics at its core. Indeed, rural modernism was so pervasive *because* of its wide-ranging presence across different social and political lines and channels of visual communication. Following on from Eric Storm's definition of regionalism as a 'new cultural form that had an enormous impact on both the existing high culture and the rising avant-garde' rural modernism in interwar Austria can thus be understood as a kind of 'third culture', which related to aims to break free from the constraints of Vienna 1900, while operating within the boundaries of official institutions and in response to national ideals – but not exclusively so.[8] As the range of materials discussed in this book

emphasises, rural modernism bridged the gap between different strata of visual culture through a highly effective vocabulary that, through repetition and abstraction, quickly became a shorthand for all things Austrian. Continually reproduced to the point of a cliché, the basic tenets of rural modernism were deceptively simple: alpine landscapes, farmers in folk costume, and fashionable tourists. Across different techniques, media and technologies, 'the rural' thus became a fixture of Austria's presentation at home and abroad.

Not least, the pervasiveness of the countryside ideal is highlighted by the fact that even now, 100 years later, Austria's visual construction as a rural idyll still dominates. Users of the Tyrol tourism website will find the following welcome on the landing page: 'Visitors to Tirol will experience a majestic and enchanting mountain landscape sure to touch their soul. Countless outdoor activities and a warm welcome make holidays in this stunning region an unforgettable experience.'[9] The accompanying photographs bear a striking resemblance to Walde's paintings, showing ski tourists in a vast alpine landscape. Meanwhile, the Künstlerhaus in Vienna showed an exhibition titled *About Life in the Countryside* in 2019. Including the work of artists such as Iris Andraschek, Lois Hechenblaikner and Eva Szombat, it addressed rural imagery from 'agrarian romanticism to provincial tristesse', emphasising the different imaginations at play in reference to 'the rural'.[10] With photographs of run-down farmhouses, folk festivities and idyllic scenes in the natural landscape, the visual language applied showed remarkable continuity to the way in which 'the rural' was constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. Not least, the political uses of the countryside also remain present, deeply entrenched in the presentation of far-right parties in folk dress and alpine settings.[11] Now as then, therefore, 'the rural' is pervasive and wide-ranging as a core part of Austria's modern visual identity.

Notes

1 Dietmar Steiner, 'Die Verlorenen Hauptstädte Berlin – Wien', *Stadtbauwelt* 48 (1986), 1876.
2 Letter from Robert Haas to Georg Haas. *Estate of Robert Haas*, Vienna: Wien Museum, 19 April 1937.
3 Peter Vandereest, 'Real Villages: National Narratives of Rural Development', in *Creating the Countryside,* eds. E. Melanie DuPuis and Peter Vandereest (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 279.
4 Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Hermann J. W. Kuprian, and Brigitte Mazohl-Wallnig, 'National Identity or Regional Identity: Austria versus Tyrol/Salzburg', in *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity*, eds. Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka (New York: Routledge, 1997), 33.
5 Paul Cloke, 'Conceptualising rurality', in *The Handbook of Rural Studies,* eds. Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage, 2006), 18.
6 Steiner, 'Die Verlorenen Hauptstädte', 1867.
7 Eric Storm, 'Regionalism in History, 1890–1945: The Cultural Approach', *European History Quarterly* 33:2 (2003), 256.
8 Storm, *The Culture of Regionalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 298.
9 Tirol Werbung GmbH, 'Tirol – Urlaub im Herz der Alpen', *Tirol.at*. https://www.tirol.at
10 Bettina Leid, Verena Kaspar-Eisert, Elke Rauth, and Peter Zawrel, *Über Leben am Land* (Salzburg: Fotohof, 2019).
11 Georg Weidacher, 'Wo Populisten zu Hause sind. Das Konzept HEIMAT in rechtspopulistischer Rhetorik am Beispiel der FPÖ', *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 50 (2020), 231–58.

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