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# OTTO HETTNER'S *PICKNICK* FROM 1906: A FIRST CONTEXTUALIZATION AND THE HISTORY OF THE RECEPTION OF A MAJOR WORK

## ABSTRACT

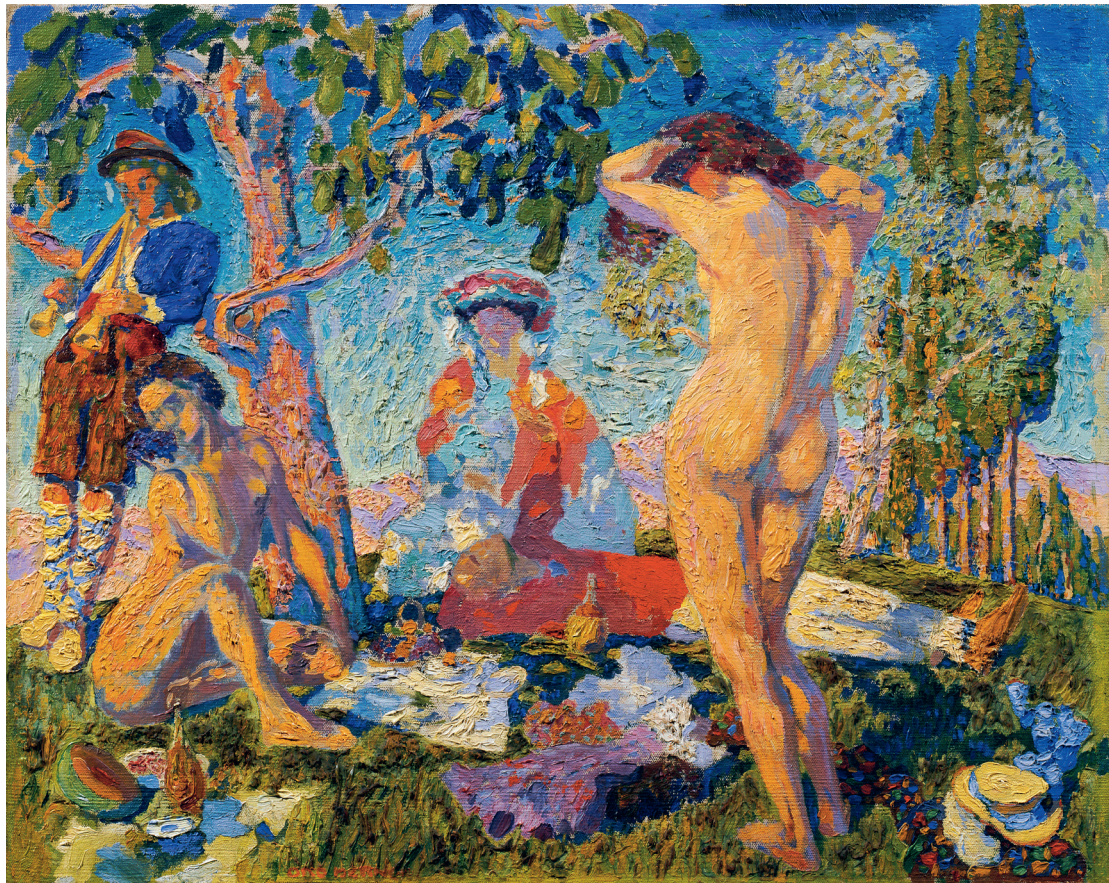
Born in Dresden, Otto Hettner (1875–1931) was a painter and graphic artist of the early Modernist period who has long been largely overlooked by researchers. Hettner lived and worked in various locations in Germany and abroad, taught as a professor in Dresden, and acted as an intermediary in the sale of artworks (for artists including Edvard Munch). His now largely unknown work, which can only be found in a few public collections, is highly varied in terms of both style and content; it emerged around 1900 in an artistic arena shaped by Impressionism, Symbolism, Expressionism, and monumental painting. Upon his death, Hettner left an oeuvre of around 4,300 works, but confiscation and war reduced this number to the approximately 60 paintings that remain today. These include *Picknick* [Picnic], which Hettner painted in Fiesole near Florence in 1906. It was one of 58 works by the artist that could be seen at the autumn exhibition of the Hagenbund in Vienna in 1910, and it was acquired for the city's Modern Gallery in 1911. This essay describes, for the first time, the context in which the work was produced, offers insight into the working methods of the artist during this very important phase of his career, and, with the help of selected reviews, traces the enormous success that he enjoyed in Vienna in 1910.

## KEYWORDS

Hettner Otto; Belvedere; Vienna; Hagenbund; Idealism; 20th century; Modernism early; *Picknick*

## INTRODUCTION

The autumn exhibition of the Künstlerbund Hagen in 1910, which took place in Vienna's Zedlitzhalle, included 58 works by the Dresden-born artist Otto Hettner (1875–1931).<sup>1</sup> According to Karl M. Kuzmany, Hettner was the much-praised “core and star” of the exhibition, which represented the most comprehensive presentation of his work to date.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent purchase for 2,000 Crowns of the painting *Picknick* [Picnic] (Fig. 1) from 1906, on behalf of the Imperial and Royal Modern Gallery, which had opened in 1903, by its director Friedrich Dörmhöffer (Fig. 2), was regarded as not only a great success for Hettner but also his definitive institutional recognition.<sup>3</sup> However, the painting never featured among the works that were exhibited by the Modern Gallery in the Orangery of the Belvedere.<sup>4</sup> A cabinet resolution of January 13, 1953, transformed the Austrian Gallery into a museum exclusively dedicated to Austrian art. As a result of this, *Picknick* became one of the pieces of international



**Fig. 1:** Otto Hettner, *Picknick* [Picnic], 1906, oil on canvas, 63.5 × 80 cm. Belvedere, Vienna, inv. no. 1164 (Photo: Belvedere, Vienna).

170. Schlafender Harlekin. Freskoentwurf.	Ölgem.
171. Aufbruch.	Ölgem.
172. Inderin.	Ölgem.
173. Nachtphantasie. Freskoentwurf.	Ölgem.
174. Unter dem Feigenbaum.	Ölgem.
175. Entwurf zur „Kreuzaufrichtung“.	Ölgem.
176. Männlicher Akt.	Ölgem.
177. Einziehen der Boote.	Pastell.
178. Pinien.	Pastell.
179. Drei Frauen.	Pastell.
180. Nilebene.	Pastell.
181. Berg am Meer.	Pastell.
182 bis 186. Studien.	Pastell.
187. Italienische Küstenstadt.	Ölgem.
188. Selbstporträt im weißen Kittel.	Ölgem.
189. <i>Picknick</i> .	Ölgem.
190. Silberpappeln.	Ölgem.
191. Florentiner Garten.	Ölgem.
192. Stilleben.	Ölgem.
193. Mann mit Pferd.	Ölgem.
194. Das weiße Haus.	Ölgem.
195. Weiblicher Akt.	Ölgem.

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**Fig. 2:** Exhibition catalog, *Hagenbund: Katalog der Herbstausstellung 1910–1911* [Hagenbund: Catalog of the Autumn Exhibition 1910–1911], Vienna, 1910, with a handwritten mark next to the Hettner painting (no. 189) that was acquired by Director Friedrich Dörnhöffer.

art that were transferred to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna in 1955 in exchange for a significant collection of medieval Austrian painting and sculpture that had been acquired in the interwar period, and it only returned to the Belvedere in 1987.<sup>5</sup>

Since its acquisition in 1911, Hettner's painting has been kept in various stores,<sup>6</sup> and its sole public appearance was in the exhibition of the collection, *Ein Blick ins Grüne: Landschaftsmalerei des 20. Jahrhunderts* [A View of Greenery: Landscape Painting of the 20th Century], in the Upper Belvedere (Fig. 3) in 1999.<sup>7</sup> It is the only work by Hettner in an Austrian museum. *Picknick* was described in the catalog to the collection from 1995 as an example of the artist's search for plastic form in interplay with light and shadow effects, and given the lack of information about his wider oeuvre, it was long regarded as a standalone work.<sup>8</sup> However, thanks to the reappraisal of Hettner's fragmentary remaining work that I carried out as part of my dissertation project, I am able to offer here a first opportunity for a considered contextualization of the painting.<sup>9</sup>

## HETTNER'S *PICKNICK* AND EXPRESSIVE IDEALISM

The stylistically versatile painter, graphic artist, and sculptor Otto Hettner (Fig. 4) left an oeuvre of around 4,300 works that includes paintings, drawings, book illustrations, set designs, and sculptures. These works remain largely unknown to this day. Hettner initially



**Fig. 3:** Exhibition of the collection *Ein Blick ins Grüne: Landschaftsmalerei des 20. Jahrhunderts* [A View of Greenery: Landscape Painting of the 20th Century] in the Upper Belvedere, 1999 (Photo: Belvedere, Vienna).



**Fig. 4:** Hugo Erfurth, *Otto Hettner*, around 1918, brown pigment print, passe-partout cutout: 225 × 168 mm. Kupferstich-Kabinett, inv. no. D 1919-21, Singer Bildn. 39524 (Photo: Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, photo by Herbert Boswank).

studied painting in Karlsruhe and Paris and then lived for several years in the vibrant, artistic French metropolis, where he became friends with Edvard Munch and intensely explored the latest cultural developments, before he and his wife Jeanne (1878–1958) moved to Florence, where they lived from 1905 to 1911. Hettner's painting *Frühstück im Grünen* [Breakfast on the Grass]—or *Picknick*, as it is better known—was produced in 1906. At the time, the artist had already been living for a year in Italy, where he had settled in a villa on the slopes of Fiesole above Florence. He probably painted the huge, grounded canvas *en plein air*, just as he had painted other works during his student days in Karlsruhe.<sup>10</sup> The impasto areas of paint flow into one another with a vibrant sense of color. The light and the shadow generate an atmospheric mood and a shimmering luminosity.

Hettner adopted a horizontal format and placed five figures in varying positions, standing, sitting, and lying on green grass below an azure sky, in a landscape that exudes a sense of the south. They are surrounded by white picnic blankets, wine bottles, and fruit, but also items of clothing and a straw hat with a blue ribbon. Two female nudes are dominantly positioned in the idyllic scene, one sitting toward the left edge of the painting and the other standing in the foreground as a figure viewed from behind, whose raised



**Fig. 5:** Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, oil on canvas, 207 × 265 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, inv. no. RF 1668 (Photo: RMN-Grand Palais [Musée d'Orsay], photo by Benoît Touchard/Mathieu Rabeau).

arms are holding her head. In the middle distance, shaded by a fig tree that Hettner had already depicted in other paintings, a seated, fully clothed woman with dark hair and a hat and a lying man with a red top and white trousers form the center of the image.<sup>11</sup> On the left edge of the painting, the artist added a shepherd to the dreamlike scene; separated from the couple by the tree, he stands somewhat aloof, blowing into his panpipes. To the right, the composition is completed by a row of cypress trees that disappears into the background, where we can make out a sunlit mountain range.

The serenely relaxed picnic scene inevitably brings to mind Édouard Manet's scandal-ridden painting *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* [The Luncheon on the Grass] (Fig. 5) from 1863. Not only did the contemporary audience reject Manet's apparent indecent motif, in which viewers are forced to become voyeurs of an intimate tableau, but this audience was also polarized by his painting technique, with its crudely modeled figures and sketchily applied paint.<sup>12</sup> Manet's contemporaries identified his work as a model from the rich



**Fig. 6:** Rafael, *The Judgment of Paris*, around 1515, copperplate print, 292 × 435 mm (sheet). Hamburger Kunsthalle, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. 246 (Photo: Hamburger Kunsthalle/bpk, photo by Christoph Irrgang).

repertoire of bathing scenes and specifically as a version of Rafael's *The Judgment of Paris* handed down by the copperplate engraver Marcantonio Raimondi around 1515 (Fig. 6), from which Manet adopted the detail of the group of figures in the bottom right-hand section of the image. Hettner's work, by contrast, is much less focused on a scandalous encounter than on the carelessly contented coming together of and relationship between individuals, combined with the beauty of their natural setting.

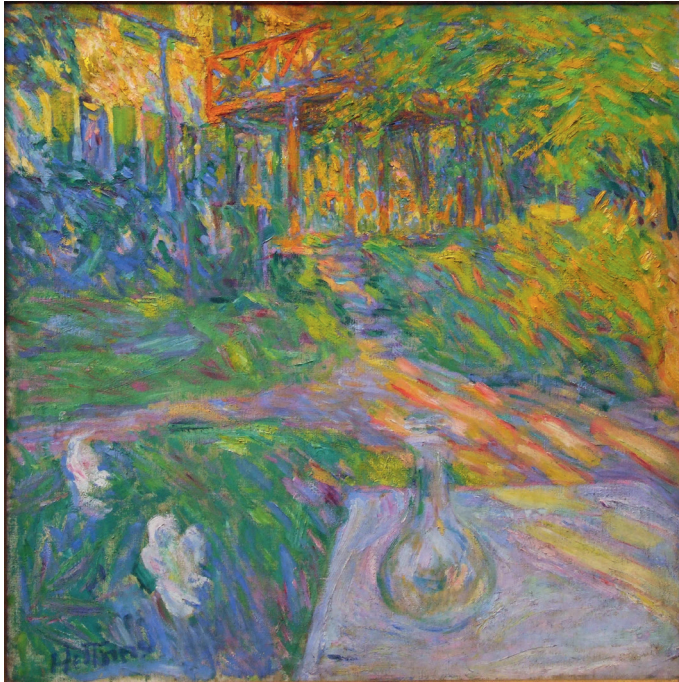
The deliberately diffuse image, which Hettner sketchily captured with crude impasto brushstrokes and an intriguingly contrasting palette of red, blue, and green, depicts a shared moment of informal recreation away from the prudery of bourgeois society. The painting also illustrates the central role of the artist's companion and future wife, Jeanne, who supported him as both a considerate partner and a model. In a form of multiple exposure, she appears in the painting as several figures in different poses: for example, the woman who can be seen in the shadow of the fig tree, affectionately cradling a man who has settled in her lap. The sunlit nudes sitting and standing in the foreground, who are striking classical poses that recall those found in Raimondi's prototype, point to the



**Fig. 7:** Otto Hettner, *Porträt Frau J. H.* [Portrait of Mrs. J. H.], 1905, tempera on asbestos, 194 × 120 cm, signed bottom left: Otto Hettner 1905, whereabouts unknown. Illustration from *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 27 (1910/1911): 102.

countless sketches, studies, and paintings by Hettner for which Jeanne repeatedly provided the motif and which have long since been lost.<sup>13</sup> Before leaving for Florence in autumn 1905, Hettner had completed a large-format portrait of his companion in tempera on asbestos, which was reproduced in the magazine *Kunst und Dekoration* [Art and Decoration] under the title *Jeanne vor einem Efeu* [Jeanne in Front of Ivy] (Fig. 7) and is now regarded as lost.<sup>14</sup>

The painting *Picknick* represents the phase of Hettner's oeuvre in which the artist was searching for a synthesis of form and color. His urge to find an immediacy of expression was demonstrated, for example, by the combination of plastic forms and descriptive tones. According to the art critic Walter Holzhausen, such a painting embodied the idealistic side of German Expressionism that Hettner had already been hinting at in certain works since 1901, and it provided a clear contrast with the group of artists known as *Die Brücke* [The Bridge], which had been active in Dresden since 1905.<sup>15</sup> The Expressive Idealism developed by Hettner was rooted in a range of international Postimpressionist positions of the final



**Fig. 8:** Otto Hettner, *Loschwitzer Landhaus mit Weinkaraffe* [Loschwitz Country House with Wine Carafe], 1897, oil on canvas, 81 × 81 cm. Albertinum, inv. no. 82/19 (Photo: Albertinum | GNM, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, photo by Elke Estel/Hans-Peter Klut).

years of the nineteenth century. Besides plein air painting, these also included the intense colors of the Postimpressionist Vincent van Gogh and the Pointillism, the Idealism, and the Symbolism of Georges Seurat, Hans von Marées, Edvard Munch, and their circles, respectively, as well as the preoccupation with sculpture of the artists around Auguste Rodin.<sup>16</sup>

The Impressionists, whose work Hettner had become acquainted with during his time in Dresden, Karlsruhe, and Paris, favored natural and urban motifs, which were executed using relaxed brushwork and a brighter palette. They interpreted weather phenomena, the passing seasons, and times of the day in such a way that their paintings clearly set themselves apart from works produced in the studio. Conversely, the Pointillists around Seurat and Paul Signac distanced themselves from the spontaneous style of painting by producing rigidly composed works, whose incremental and additive method of applying the paint intensified the luminosity of the colors. Van Gogh transformed the thick layers of paint in his portraits and landscapes into a medium of subjective sensations that had already served as an inspiration for Hettner's early work (Fig. 8).<sup>17</sup>

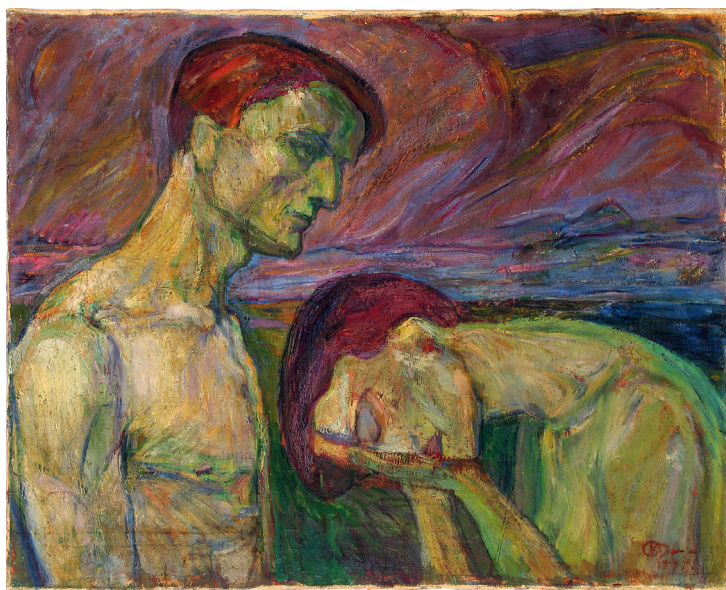
This approach to painting based on the specific moment, which is also reflected in *Picknick*, contrasts with an art rooted in Classicism that emphasizes lines at the expense of colors and that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in the *Existenzmalerei* [Existentialist Painting] of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, the work of Marées and the German Idealists, or the Symbolism of Munch, Ferdinand Hodler, and Arnold Böcklin.<sup>18</sup>



**Fig. 9:** Ludwig von Hofmann, *Idyll (Männlicher und weiblicher Halbnacktheit in der Landschaft)* [Idyll (Male and Female Seminate in the Landscape)], 1894/1895, oil on canvas, 206 × 324 cm. Belvedere, inv. no. 7990 (Photo: Belvedere, Vienna/Johannes Stoll).

Around 1900, Hettner's native city of Dresden became a center for the Lebensreform and the arts and crafts movements, the Impressionism of Carl Bantzer, Gotthardt Kuehl, and Robert Sterl, and Idealist and Symbolist art, whose key representatives include Ludwig von Hofmann, Georg Lührig, Richard Müller, Sascha Schneider, Hans Unger, and Oskar Zwintscher.<sup>19</sup> For example, Müller and Zwintscher were appointed to professorships at the Dresden Academy of Art in 1903 and 1904 respectively.<sup>20</sup>

Idealist art is characterized by relatively inactive, statuesque, mostly naked existential figures, who are depicted as if onstage, timeless, placeless, and detached from nature, as exemplified by Hofmann's work *Idyll* (Fig. 9). Another common feature is the harmonious presentation of the ageless ideal of youth and beauty. The Symbolists broaden the repertoire by characterizing the world as a symbol of a deeper reality and by expressing feelings and states of mind. Inspired by these ideas and as a result of his contact with Munch in Paris, Hettner produced paintings such as *Paar* [Couple] (Fig. 10) in 1898.<sup>21</sup> In works such as *Junger Mann am Getreidefeld* [Young Man in a Cornfield] (Fig. 11)<sup>22</sup> and *Picknick*, both of which were painted in 1906, the figures are integral to rather than separated from the



**Fig. 10:** Otto Hettner, *Paar* [Couple], 1898, oil on canvas, 65 × 81 cm. Museumsberg Flensburg, inv. no. 25056 (Photo: Museumsberg Flensburg).



**Fig. 11:** Otto Hettner, *Junger Mann am Getreidefeld* [Young Man in a Cornfield], 1906, oil on canvas, 126 × 93 cm. Albertinum, inv. no. 89/33 (Photo: Albertinum | GNM, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, photo by Elke Estel/Hans-Peter Klut).

surrounding nature. *Picknick* celebrates a paradisiacal unity of humanity and the natural world. This carefree, harmonious existence in a seemingly elysian landscape is a clear reference to the Lebensreform movement of the fin de siècle that was very strong at the time.

Around 1900, Hettner returned to the question of how to reconcile lighting conditions and local and luminous colors with a precise modeling of bodies and a clear pictorial composition. His paintings awaken the impression that he wanted to express the essence of things through the precision of his form and contours and to combine these with the sense of color that is evoked by lighting and atmospheric phenomena. Hettner's art sought to merge contour-based drawing with color-based painting into a new unity. His pictures bear witness to his efforts to rediscover the missing spatial depth of Impressionism and re-create the sense of time of Idealism with the help of the intense daylight of Italy. He adapted nineteenth-century pictorial traditions and motifs and combined these with his experiments with luminous color to form a new synthesis. This is why art historians think that Hettner's Expressive Idealism provided an important contribution to the emergence of Modernism.

## RECEPTION IN VIENNA

Having been painted in Italy, *Picknick* was first presented in a solo exhibition of Hettner's work in Kunstsalon Emil Richter in Dresden and in the *Dreizehnte Ausstellung der Berliner Secession* [Thirteenth Exhibition of the Berlin Secession], both of which took place in 1907, and then in the *Internationale Kunstausstellung der Münchener Secession* [International Art Exhibition of the Munich Secession] in Munich in 1910. In the same year, the art critic and authority on Hettner's oeuvre Paul Fechter was commissioned to write a text about the artist and his work in the art magazine *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* [German Art and Decoration].<sup>23</sup> The text was accompanied by nine illustrations, one of which was *Picknick*—under the title *Frühstück im Grünen* (Fig. 12). Of the 260 works in the autumn exhibition of the Hagenbund in Vienna, 58 were recent works by Hettner, who was described as “a truly idiosyncratic Impressionist,”<sup>24</sup> a representative of “Neo-idealism,”<sup>25</sup> and a “Berlin ‘Neoimpressionist.’”<sup>26</sup>

Regarded as open and heterogeneous, the Hagenbund repeatedly appeared as an important international network of Modern artists between the Secession and the Künstlerhaus, and its positive reputation owed much to invited figures such as Hettner. Hettner was involved with the Hagenbund at the point at which the movement embodied the transition from restrained Modernism and included positions ranging from Impressionism to Expressionism. An unnamed author filled several pages of the catalog



**Fig. 12:** Illustration of the painting *Picknick* in Paul Fechter's essay in the magazine *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 27 (1910/1911): 104.

of the autumn exhibition of the Hagenbund with an essay outlining Hettner's artistic career, from his years as a student in Karlsruhe and Paris to the work that he was producing at the time, in which he was seeking "to increasingly shape the form using color and to see this color as the volumetric, modeling, and image-shaping element."<sup>27</sup> Writing in the *Wiener Montags-Journal* [Vienna Monday Journal], Max Bandler noted that Hettner's search for monumentality, form, and color was central to the development of his oeuvre.<sup>28</sup>

Reviews of Hettner's work reveal how his Expressive Idealism enjoyed huge success in Vienna as a previously unknown artistic style that positioned him somewhere between Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Oskar Kokoschka. Not only were most critics positive, but they also seemed to be trying to outdo each other with their praise. He was presented, for example, as an artist "who is celebrated across Germany,"<sup>29</sup> and he was labeled as the exhibition's "showstopper,"<sup>30</sup> to whom all other participants were subordinate.<sup>31</sup> Arthur

Roessler described his works as “the most significant in this year’s autumn exhibition of the Hagenbund.”<sup>32</sup> Hans Held also singled out Hettner as the best artist in the exhibition,<sup>33</sup> while Ludwig Abels wrote that Hettner’s strong color combinations provided a striking contrast with Vienna’s decorative art.<sup>34</sup> The “spectacle” of Hettner, who “enables the world to explode in a color-driven firework display,” particularly caught the eye of the reviewer from the *Ostdeutsche Rundschau* [East German Review].<sup>35</sup> Similar words could be found in the *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt* [News World Newspaper]: “At the center, Hettner sets off his coloristic fireworks.”<sup>36</sup> The works’ bright and richly contrasting palette is an aspect that is repeatedly touched upon in reviews.

More critical reviews could be read in the *Neues Wiener Journal* [New Vienna Journal], which, while praising Hettner’s delicate sense of contour, form, and color, considered his Pointillist technique and primitive depiction of nature outdated—a technical argument that is retrospectively hard to refute against the background of the two-dimensional approach of Dresden’s Expressionist Die Brücke and Wassily Kandinsky’s abstract series of *Improvisations*.<sup>37</sup> Karl Kuzmany, on the other hand, saw Hettner as a “pioneer of a new monumental art” that was now on show in Vienna for the first time, whose “extraordinary importance” hugely enriched the exhibition.<sup>38</sup> Kuzmany was particularly gushing in his praise of both Hettner—“a tumultuously raw and powerful talent that is working hard to emerge”—and the colorful paintings in the show: “In terms of pure color, *Neapolitanische Phantasie* [Neapolitan Fantasy] and *Picknick* [Picnic] are such feasts of sassily juxtaposed tones, and the Italian *Berglandschaft* [Mountain Landscape] creates such a noble sense of unadulterated longing.”<sup>39</sup> At the same time, Friedrich Stern’s universal description—“Its natural color is ocher, to which a touch of red adds a blue shadow, fulfilling one of the basic requirements of unassailable modernity”—also applies to *Picknick*.<sup>40</sup> Armin Friedmann similarly emphasized these intense colors when he wrote, “The rich collection of images [...] charges, rages, and bombards us with its colors, its full range of bright colors!”<sup>41</sup> At the same time, he was critical that so many prototypes were also on show and concluded, “Let us hope that this artist finally discovers himself, so that he, too, can then be a role model for the next generation.”<sup>42</sup>

The critic from the *Arbeiterzeitung* [Workers’ Newspaper], Arthur Roessler, pointed to the influence of Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Marées, and he called *Picknick* a successful example “that should be contemplated and visually enjoyed.”<sup>43</sup> This was also the assessment of Hans Held, one of several critics who singled out *Picknick* for the coherence of its colors.<sup>44</sup> Kuzmany also praised Hettner for the way in which his figurative compositions made viewers aware of the artist’s “mastery over the mechanism and structure of the human form.”<sup>45</sup> Hettner’s quest to unite rigid form and dynamic color

earned him the label of an “Impressionist, who draws.”<sup>46</sup> Or, as pointedly paraphrased in the *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* [Illustrated Vienna Extra Edition], “It sometimes really does feel like a marriage between a well-behaved German professor and a wildly Corybantian Parisian cocotte.”<sup>47</sup>

As these reviews demonstrate, the 1910 exhibition was a complete success for Hettner. It also attracted the attention of English-speaking international critics: *The Studio*, for example, wrote of “a true artist in spirit and feeling, who has hitherto remained unknown to the art-loving Viennese.”<sup>48</sup> But the subsequent purchase of *Picknick* for 2,000 Crowns on behalf of Vienna’s Modern Gallery (now the Austrian Gallery Belvedere) in 1911 represented an even greater success.<sup>49</sup> Following this impressive performance, Hettner was admitted to the Hagenbund as a corresponding member in the same year and went on to exhibit many more times.<sup>50</sup>

Kuzmany’s assessment may appear more ambivalent when one retrospectively considers such words as the following: “He will not be easy to forget, because the glow of his colors are illuminating the path to the future, full of rebellion and hope at one and the same time.”<sup>51</sup> After spending some time in Berlin and a period of service in the First World War, Hettner was appointed to the Dresden Academy of Art in 1917, taught as a professor from 1919, and was largely responsible for the alignment of the institution with international Modernism. His work was interrupted by recurrent bouts of tuberculosis, which forced him to spend time convalescing in southern climes and led to long periods of absence from the academy. Hettner died in Dresden in 1931, and his work was exhibited comprehensively for the last time in a memorial exhibition in the city the following year.<sup>52</sup>

The removal of significant works from German museums as part of the Nazi campaign against “degenerate art” and the bombing of Dresden in February 1945 led to the loss of much of Hettner’s oeuvre, and he was all but forgotten for many years, not least owing to the disappearance of major works and the shortage of biographical information. This lack of knowledge about his life and work eventually led to the geographically limited categorization of the artist; to the inadequate or incorrect dating of works in catalogs of collections, such as that of the Galerie Neue Meister in Dresden;<sup>53</sup> and to Hettner being overlooked by the organizers of many exhibition and publication projects related to Dresden or the Stilkunst of the early twentieth century.<sup>54</sup> This unfamiliarity continues to affect the painting addressed in this article, *Picknick*, which provides important testimony to both Hettner’s decisive period of activity in Italy and his significant presence in Vienna but which has only been displayed once since its acquisition—in the aforementioned special exhibition in 1999, in which it was included because of its apt motif.<sup>55</sup> While Hettner remains almost completely unknown in Vienna to this day, he has been progressively

rediscovered in his hometown of Dresden during the past few years,<sup>56</sup> and his work is now correctly dated thanks to the inventory of his estate that I was able to locate.<sup>57</sup> His remaining work has yet to be presented in a museum context.<sup>58</sup>

The comments about *Picknick* in the reviews of the Hagenbund exhibition in Vienna in 1910 point out that Hettner's artistic evolution can be seen in the interaction between color and form in the painting and that, against the background of the rapid artistic developments that were occurring around 1900, he was seeking to find his own personal style in Expressive Idealism. Hettner's art is a remarkable example of the stylistic pluralism of his day, in which Impressionism, Symbolism, Neoidealism, Expressionism, and individual artistic role models such as Van Gogh, Munch, and Marées were combined and a wide range of influences came together. As a result, Hettner is one of the central figures of the *Stilkunst* of the early twentieth century, whose most notable accomplishment was his translation of a classical notion of art into a modern pictorial language with a radiant sense of color.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The exhibition was held from November 19 to December 10, 1910. Otto Hettner's 58 works are numbered 144–201 in the exhibition catalog. See *Hagenbund: Katalog der Herbstausstellung 1910–1911*, exh. cat., Künstlerbund Hagen, Vienna, November 19, 1910–December 10, 1911 (Vienna: Künstlerbund Hagen, 1910). For the exhibition in general, see Agnes Husslein-Arco, Matthias Boeckl, and Harald Krejci, eds., *Hagenbund: A European Network of Modernism 1900 to 1938. 1900 to 1938*, exh. cat., Belvedere, Vienna, October 11, 2014–February 1, 2015 (Munich: Hirmer, 2014), 155. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by Rupert Hebblethwaite.
- <sup>2</sup> Karl M. Kuzmany, "Aus dem Wiener Kunstleben," *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk* 14, no. 1 (1911): 62.
- <sup>3</sup> Acquisition documents from January/February 1911, Belvedere Archive, Vienna, Zl. 188/1911.
- <sup>4</sup> See the published list of the works of art of the Modern Gallery shown in the Orangery of the Belvedere between 1929 and 1937, documented in the library of the Belvedere. Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, ed., *Moderne Galerie in der Orangerie des Belvederes: Verzeichnis der Kunstwerke* (Vienna: Schroll, 1931–1937), K27684.
- <sup>5</sup> During this period, the painting had the inventory number GG NG120 but was incorrectly dated "around 1915." There was, however, no plan to pass it on to the Museum of Modern Art. I would like to thank Dr. Susanne Hehenberger, curator and archivist of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, for the information from the KHM database.
- <sup>6</sup> According to current information, the painting was also never exhibited in the Kunsthistorisches Museum. See Verein der Museumsfreunde in Wien, ed., *Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: Neue Galerie in der Stallburg—Kurzführer* (Vienna: Verein der Museumsfreunde, undated), documented in the library of the Belvedere.
- <sup>7</sup> No catalog of this exhibition of the collection appeared. The exhibition is mentioned in the annual report of the Belvedere. See Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, ed., *Jahresbericht Belvedere 1998/99* (Vienna: Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, 2000), 82–83.
- <sup>8</sup> Michaela Pappernigg, Cornelia Reiter, and Thomas Kahler, *Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts: Bestandskatalog der Österreichischen Galerie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2, G–K (Vienna: Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, 1995), 126.
- <sup>9</sup> Kati Renner, "Facetten der frühen Moderne: Studien zum Leben und Werk Otto Hettners (1875–1931)" (PhD diss., Dresden University of Technology, 2024).
- <sup>10</sup> See Hettner's letters to Hermann Schmitt. Hermann Schmitt, 255 Autografen aus den Jahren 1891–1928 und 10 Beil., sign.: Mscr. Dresd. Aut. 414, 1–255, Sächsische Landesbibliothek—Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden; here, nos. 24/25, from spring 1894.
- <sup>11</sup> See the paintings *Junger Mann am Getreidefeld* [Young Man in a Cornfield], 1906, oil on canvas, 126 × 93 cm, signed bottom left "Otto Hettner," catalog of the Hettner Estate 1931: 80, no. 2216, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Albertinum | GNM, inv. no. 89/33; *Wbl. Halbakt unter Feigenbaum* [Female Nude Under a Fig Tree], around 1906, oil on canvas, 62 × 80 cm, in the catalog of the Hettner Estate 1931: 79, no. 2193, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. Hettner mit Kind unter Feigenbaum* [Mrs. J. Hettner with Child Under a Fig Tree], 1907, oil on canvas, 120 × 180 cm, signed and dated: OH 1907, in the catalog of the Hettner Estate 1931: 79, no. 2197, whereabouts unknown.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Kropmanns, "Edouard Manet—*Das Frühstück im Grünen*," *Weltkunst*, January 23, 2018:

<https://www.weltkunst.de/kunstwissen/2018/01/edouard-manet-das-fruehstueck-im-gruenen>.

<sup>13</sup> The following paintings, all probably executed in portrait format, are described as featuring Jeanne Hettner:

*Frau J. Hettner (Profil gegen Landschaft)* [Ms. J. Hettner (Profile Against Landscape)], around 1907, oil on canvas, 60 × 84 cm, catalog of the Hettner Estate 1931: 79, no. 2192, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. Hettner mit Kind* [Mrs. J. Hettner with Child], 1906, oil on canvas, 89 × 110 cm, *ibid.*: 79, no. 2194, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. Hettner mit Kind unter Feigenbaum* [Mrs. J. Hettner with Child Under a Fig Tree], 1907, oil on canvas, 120 × 180 cm, signed and dated: OH 1907, *ibid.*: 79, no. 2197, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. H. in Interieur (Rs. Skizze ml. Akt)* [Ms. J. H. in Interior (Back: Sketch Ml. Nude)], around 1905, oil on asbestos, 68 × 70 cm, in the catalog of the Hettner Estate 1931: 79, no. 2198, whereabouts unknown; *Portrait von Frau J. Hettner (vor Efeu)* [Portrait of Mrs. J. Hettner (in Front of Ivy)], tempera, 120 × 194 cm [194 × 120 cm], signed and dated "Otto Hettner 1905," *ibid.*: 79, no. 2201, whereabouts unknown; *Portrait Frau Jeanne Hettner* [Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Hettner], around 1907, oil on canvas, 60 × 75 cm, *ibid.*: 79, no. 2202, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. Hettner in Hängematte mit Sonnenschirm* [Mrs. J. Hettner in a Hammock with a Parasol], around 1907, oil on canvas, 60 × 75 cm, *ibid.*: 79, no. 2203, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. Hettner (Ganze Figur im Freien sitzend)* [Ms. J. Hettner (Full Figure Sitting Outdoors)], around 1907, oil on canvas, 64 × 80 cm, *ibid.*: 80, no. 2207, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. Hettner* [Mrs. J. Hettner], around 1908, oil on canvas, 50 × 68 cm, *ibid.*: 80, no. 2214, whereabouts unknown; *Frau J. Hettner* [Mrs. J. Hettner], around 1908, oil on canvas, 64 × 80 cm, *ibid.*: 80, no. 2225, whereabouts unknown; *Portrait: Frau Jeanne Hettner* [Portrait: Mrs. Jeanne Hettner], around 1907, oil on canvas, 70 × 90 cm, *ibid.*: 88, no. 2386, whereabouts unknown.

<sup>14</sup> *Porträt Frau J. H. (auch: Porträt von Frau Jeanne Hettner [Vor Efeu])* [Portrait of Mrs. J. H. (also: Portrait of Mrs. Jeanne Hettner [in Front of Ivy])], 1905, tempera on asbestos, 194 × 68 cm, signed bottom left "Otto Hettner 1905," probably identical to 2201 in the catalog of the estate (different dimensions), whereabouts unknown; illustrated in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 27 (1910/1911): 102.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Holzhausen, "Otto Hettner: Zur Gedächtnisausstellung im Sächsischen Kunstverein," *Dresdner Anzeiger*, September 4, 1932: 2.

<sup>16</sup> Hettner no longer lived in the well-known Montmartre district in Paris but moved into a studio in the so-called Cité Fleurie, a complex of ateliers and gardens on Boulevard Arago in Montparnasse, in which celebrated artists such as Auguste Rodin and Edvard Munch had their studios. Rodin exhibited in Dresden at an early point in, for example, the *Erste Internationale Kunstausstellung* in 1897, the *Zweite Internationale Kunstausstellung* in 1901, and the *Große Kunst-Ausstellung* in 1904. The latter exhibition also featured Hettner's sculpture *Bogenschütze* [Archer], which is now regarded as lost.

<sup>17</sup> It is hard to imagine that Hettner produced his early work without being familiar with the richly colored impasto and lengthy brushstrokes of Van Gogh's paintings. The first posthumous Van Gogh exhibition took place in the gallery of the art dealer Ambroise Vollard on Rue Laffitte, in June 1895, but Hettner only moved to Paris in the autumn. Hettner could have seen the numerous works that were exhibited on another occasion in the gallery between December 1896 and February 1897 or those that were exhibited in the Bernheim-Jeune

gallery in 1901. Hettner's reception coincided with Van Gogh's breakthrough in France. See Alexander Eiling, "Prologue: Germany Came Later. Van Gogh's Reception in France and the Netherlands between 1888 and 1905," in *Making Van Gogh: A German Love Story*, ed. Alexander Eiling and Felix Krämer, exh. cat., Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, October 23, 2019–February 16, 2020 (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2019): 21–35, 30–31.

18 See Anne-Sibylle Domm-Maurer, *Der "klassische" Hans von Marées und die Existenzmalerei Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Miscellanea Bavarica Monacensia 146 (Munich: Uni-Druck, 1989).

19 See Andreas Dehmer, *Malerei des Fin de Siecle in der Dresdener Galerie* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2010).

20 See Birgit Dalbajewa, "Chancenreich: Zu kulturellem Leben und Malerei in Dresden um 1900," in *Weltflucht und Moderne: Oskar Zwintscher in der Kunst um 1900*, ed. Andreas Dehmer and Birgit Dalbajewa, exh. cat., Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, May 14, 2022–January 15, 2023 (Dresden: Sandstein, 2022): 134–151.

21 The four surviving letters written by Hettner to Munch between 1897 and 1922 provide evidence of this contact. See Munchmuseet Oslo, sign. MM K 2490, MM K 2492, MM K 2494, and MM K 2497.

22 The Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden dates this work to 1926, but it was in fact completed in 1906, as confirmed by my previous research. See Kati Renner, "'Eine eigenartige Farbenfreude': Otto Hettner als Beispiel für den Austausch zwischen internationaler Moderne und Dresdner Kunstszene," in *Drehscheibe Dresden: Lokale Kunstszene und globale Moderne*, ed. Gilbert Lupfer, Susanne König, and Maria Obenaus (Dresden: Sandstein, 2018): 14–23.

23 Paul Fechter, "Otto Hettner–Florenz," *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration: Illustr. Monatshefte für moderne Malerei, Plastik, Architektur, Wohnungskunst u. künstlerisches Frauen-Arbeiten* 27 (1910/1911): 103–108.

24 This is according to the announcement of the exhibition opening on November 27, 1910, in *Grazer Volksblatt*, November 25, 1910: 1.

25 Friedrich Stern, "Feuilleton: Kunstausstellungen," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* 44, no. 332, December 3, 1910: 1–2, 1.

26 R. v. Enderes, "Hagenbund," *Ostdeutsche Rundschau*, no. 271, November 27, 1910: 8.

27 "Mittelsaal: Kollektion Otto Hettner," in *Hagenbund* 1910 (see note 1): 23–25, 25.

28 Max Bandler, "Hagenbund," *Wiener Montags-Journal*, no. 1504, December 5, 1910: 6.

29 Untitled article, *Die Zeit*, no. 2933, November 25, 1910: 4.

30 R. B., "Hagenbund," *Wiener Montags-Journal*, November 28, 1910: 8.

31 Stern 1910, 1–2, 1 (see note 25).

32 Arthur Roessler, "Hagenbund," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, October 31, 1910, quoted in Husslein-Arco, Boeckl, and Krejci 2014 (see note 1): 155.

33 Hans Held, "Herbstausstellung des 'Hagenbund,'" *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung: Modernes Familienblatt. Aktuelle Wochenschrift mit Kunst-Revue*, no. 16 (1910): 401.

34 Ludwig W. Abels, "Feuilleton: Klimt. Hettner. Raffaeli. Palmié. Vier Wiener Ausstellungen," *Pester Lloyd*, December 15, 1910: 1–2, 1.

35 R. v. Enderes, "Hagenbund," *Ostdeutsche Rundschau*, no. 274, December 1, 1910: 7.

36 R. v. Enderes, "Die Herbstausstellung des 'Hagenbundes,'" *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, no. 275, November 30, 1910: 13.

37 B. G., "Hagenbund," *Neues Wiener Journal*, December 4, 1910: 20.

- <sup>38</sup> Karl M. Kuzmany, "Von Ausstellungen und Sammlungen," *Die Kunst für Alle*, no. 9, February 1, 1911: 215.
- <sup>39</sup> Kuzmany, "Aus dem Wiener Kunstleben," 1911, 62 (see note <sup>2</sup>).
- <sup>40</sup> Stern 1910, 1–2, 1 (see note <sup>25</sup>).
- <sup>41</sup> Armin Friedmann, "Feuilleton: Bildende Kunst. (Klimt.—Gustav Jekel.—Herbst-Ausstellung im 'Hagen-Bund')," *WienerAbendpost: Beilage zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 274, December 1, 1910: 1–2, 2.
- <sup>42</sup> Friedmann 1910, 1–2, 2 (see note <sup>41</sup>).
- <sup>43</sup> Roessler 2010, 155 (see note <sup>32</sup>).
- <sup>44</sup> Held 1910, 401 (see note <sup>33</sup>).
- <sup>45</sup> Kuzmany, "Von Ausstellungen und Sammlungen," 1911, 215 (see note <sup>38</sup>).
- <sup>46</sup> Friedmann 1910, 1–2, 2 (see note <sup>41</sup>).
- <sup>47</sup> "Kunstaussstellung: 'Hagenbund,'" *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, November 29, 1910: 11–12, 12.
- <sup>48</sup> A. S. L., "Studio Talk: Vienna," *International Studio*, New York, no. 170, April 1911: 145–150, 147.
- <sup>49</sup> Brief reports could be found in a number of newspapers on January 8, 1911: "Theater und Kunst," *Wiener Zeitung*, no. 6, January 8, 1911: 6, col. 3; "Theater, Kunst und Literatur," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, January 8, 1911: 14, col. 3; *Neues Wiener Journal*, January 8, 1911: 14, col. 1.
- <sup>50</sup> "Neue Mitglieder des Hagenbundes," *Die Zeit*, June 13, 1911: 3. For example, Hettner participated in the Special Exhibition of the Viennese Künstlerbund Hagen in the Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague in November/December 1911. See Husslein-Arco, Boeckl, and Krejci 2014, 161 (see note <sup>1</sup>).
- <sup>51</sup> Kuzmany, "Aus dem Wiener Kunstleben," 1911, 62 (see note <sup>2</sup>).
- <sup>52</sup> *Otto Hettner: Gedächtnisausstellung 1932*, exh. cat., Sächsischer Kunstverein, Dresden, September 1932 (Dresden: Sächsischer Kunstverein, 1932).
- <sup>53</sup> Ulrich Bischoff and Dagmar Sommer, eds., *Galerie Neue Meister Dresden—Illustriertes Bestandsverzeichnis*, collection cat., Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Galerie Neue Meister (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2010), 2:173–175.
- <sup>54</sup> For thematic exhibitions and publications related to Dresden in which Hettner was overlooked, see Heike Biedermann and Andreas Dehmer, eds., *Italienbilder zwischen Romantik und Realismus: Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts*, exh. cat., Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden/Galerie Neue Meister, February 10–May 28, 2017 (Dresden: Sandstein, 2017); Heike Biedermann, Ulrich Bischoff, and Mathias Wagner, eds., *Von Monet bis Mondrian: Meisterwerke der Moderne aus Dresdner Privatsammlungen der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, exh. cat., Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Galerie Neue Meister, September 16, 2006–January 14, 2007 (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2006); Anna Greve, Gilbert Lupfer, and Peter Pläßmeier, eds., *Der Blick auf Dresden: Die Frauenkirche und das Werden der Dresdner Stadtsilhouette*, exh. cat., Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, October 29, 2005–May 1, 2006 (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2005); Hans Joachim Neidhardt, *Dresden, wie es Maler sahen* (Leipzig: Seemann, 2005).
- <sup>55</sup> See note <sup>7</sup>.
- <sup>56</sup> The detailed work carried out by the author of this essay to contextualize Hettner for the first time tied in with a local rediscovery of the artist and led to the publication of individual case studies on works by Hettner.

See Linda Karohl-Kistmacher and Gisbert Porstmann, eds., *Otto Hettner—Roland Hettner in der Sammlung der Städtischen Galerie Dresden* (Dresden: Museen der Stadt Dresden, 2014); Viola Lippold, “Der Maler Otto Hettner—Zur Dresdner Kunst um 1900” (master’s thesis, Pedagogical University “Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander” Dresden, 1989); Renner 2018, 14–23 (see note 22); Kati Renner, “Ein wiederentdecktes Schlüsselwerk von Otto Hettner: Das Porträt seiner Frau Jeanne mit Hut,” in *ars delectat semper: Essays zur Kunstgeschichte für Henrik Karge zum 60. Geburtstag von seinen Schülern und Mitarbeitern*, ed. Susanne Müller-Bechtel and Peter-Heinrich Jahn (Dresden: Institute of Art and Music of the University of Technology, 2019): 94–96, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:14-qucosa2-351922>.

57 Roland Hettner, *Otto Hettner Nachlass*, typewritten manuscript, 1931, private collection, author’s copy.

58 For example, no exhibition was held in his honor to mark his 100th birthday in 1975, his 150th birthday in 2025, or the large donation by Sabine and Florian Hettner to the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in 1981.

**Kati Renner** studied history of art at Dresden University of Technology, where she completed her doctorate in 2024 with a monograph about the artist Otto Hettner (1875–1931). Her professional career has involved positions at a number of museums, including as a curatorial assistant in the architecture and prints and drawings collections of the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, and as a project assistant for the exhibition projects *Karl Marx and Capitalism* (2022) at the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, and *Secessionen: Klimt, Stuck, Liebermann* (2023) at the Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, which was held in cooperation with the Wien Museum. She has been working as an assistant curator of the 18th- and 19th-century collection at the Belvedere in Vienna since 2025.

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*Issue 3 cover illustration:* Otto Hettner, *Picnic* (detail), 1906, oil on canvas, 63.5 × 80 cm. Belvedere, Vienna, inv. no. 1164 (Photo: Belvedere, Vienna).