

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Franz von Stuck
(1863 Tettenweis – 1928 Munich)

Mary Stuck in traditional Münchner dress, ca. 1912

Oil over pencil on octagonal cardboard, In the original frame designed by the artist
35 x 35 cm
13 3/4 x 13 3/4 in.

Provenance:

Estate of the artist, Munich Mary Heilmann-Stuck, Munich;
By inheritance to the former owner.



None of his models were portrayed by Franz von Stuck as frequently as his daughter Mary (1896–1961). Her mother was Anna Maria Brandmair (1875–1944), whom the artist met in the mid-1890s at Munich’s Café Luitpold, where she worked as a buffet attendant. It was not long before the two became lovers. However, Stuck left his partner before Mary’s birth and in 1897 married the wealthy German-American physician’s widow Mary Lindpaintner (1865–1929), who played a decisive role in advancing his career within the Munich art scene.

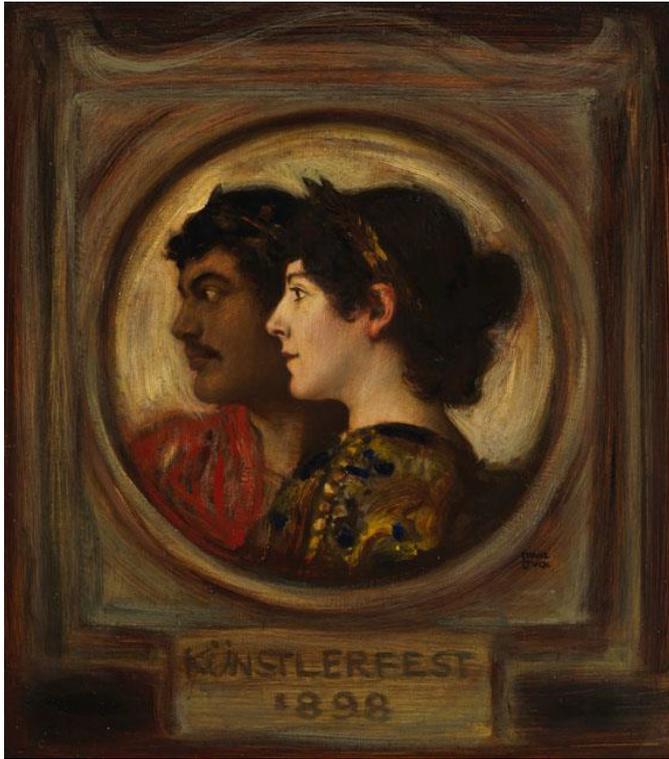
In 1898 Franz and Mary Stuck moved into a villa on the elegant Prinzregentenstraße, built according to the artist’s own designs. The impressive building served both as a workplace and as a setting for representation and, thanks to the cultivated lady of the house, quickly developed into a social centre of Munich. Despite all its splendour, however, a shadow lay over the couple’s happiness, as the child they longed for did not arrive.

The situation changed with the adoption of Stuck’s illegitimate daughter Mary, who had spent her early years with her mother and was later placed in a boarding school. From 1904 until her marriage in 1917, Mary spent happy years in the Villa Stuck, conceived as a total work of art, and herself became part of the “family enterprise Stuck.” She posed for her father—toward whom she felt a deep affection—for dozens of drawings, pastels, and oil paintings.

At times Stuck staged his daughter in elaborate costumes; at others he focused entirely on her personality. Over nearly a decade and a half, an extensive body of work emerged in which the artist—who, following his ennoblement in 1905, was regarded as Munich’s “painter prince”—explored the rich expressive possibilities of female portraiture through Mary’s development from child to young woman. These works are among Stuck’s most intimate portraits and testify to the demonstrably deep love between father and daughter.

In the painting *Mary Stuck in traditional Münchner dress*, created around 1912, the artist depicts his approximately sixteen-year-old daughter en face. Characteristic of the motif—prepared by the artist through numerous photographic studies and preserved in several versions—are the corkscrew curls, hairpins, and the bodice worn by the sitter. By choosing an octagonal format and omitting any spatial context, Stuck focuses the viewer’s attention entirely on Mary’s charming smile and her direct gaze.

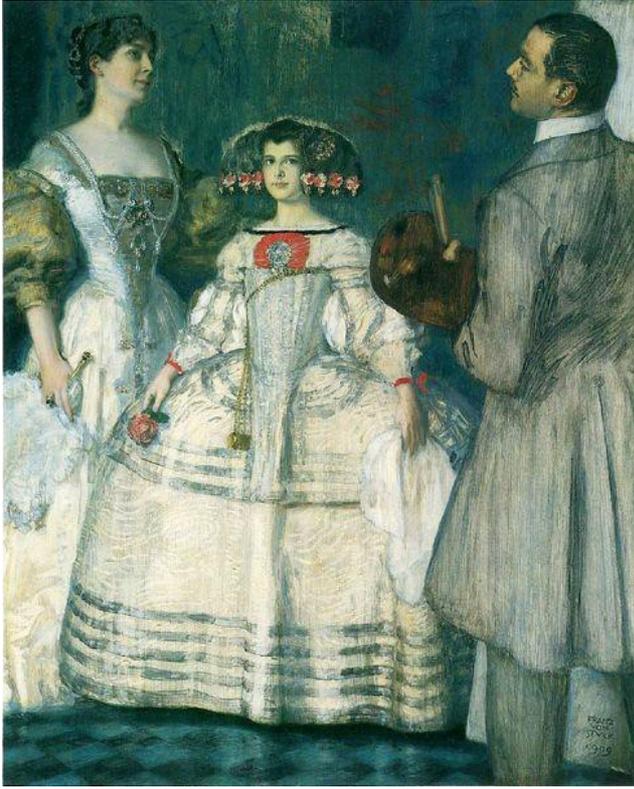
Although Stuck did not complete the painting in the classical sense of the word, leaving it in a sketch-like intermediate state, it nevertheless contains and unfolds all the elements typical of his portraits of his daughter Mary. The fact that the artist provided it with an ornate frame made after his own design suggests that he may have regarded it as finished at this stage. Might Stuck have refrained from further elaboration in order to leave posterity a record of the creative process behind his paintings?



Franz von Stuck, *Franz and Mary Stuck*, 1898,
©Museum Villa Stuck, Munich.



Villa Stuck, photographed in 1903, ©Museum Villa Stuck, München.



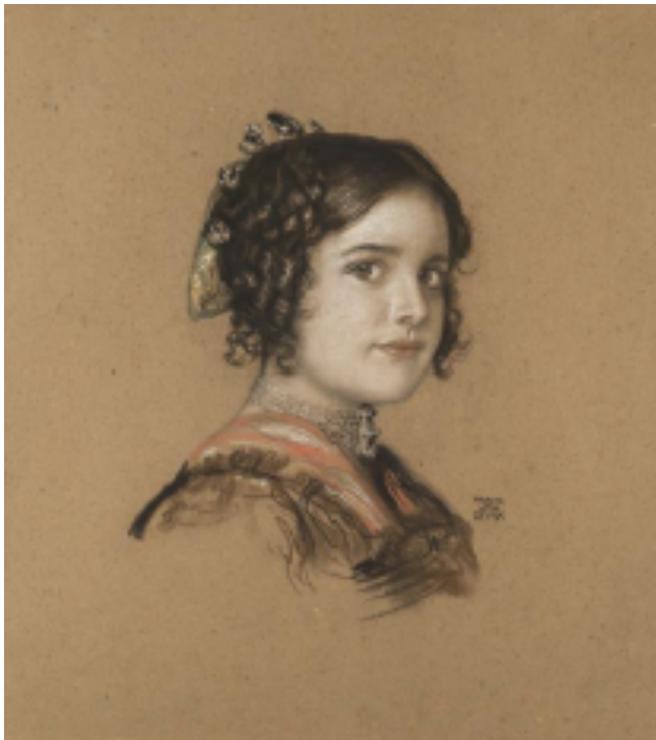
Franz von Stuck, *Stuck with his wife and daughter*, 1909,
©Musée des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.



Franz von Stuck and his daughter Mary, 1906, artist's estate.



Mary Stuck in traditional Münchner dress, 1906, artist's estate.



Franz von Stuck, *Mary Stuck in traditional Münchner dress*, 1906, Private collection.