

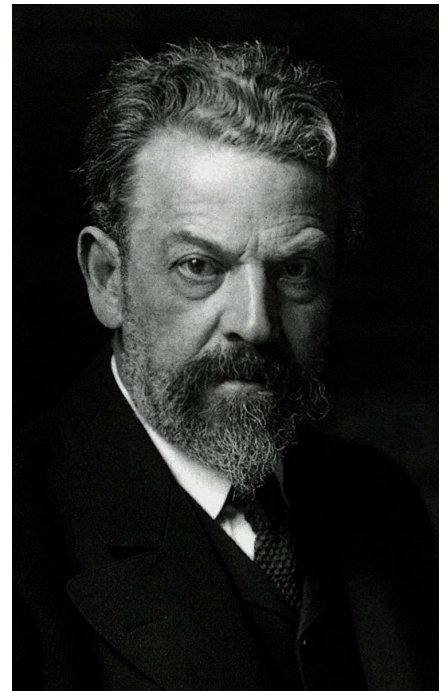
KUNKEL FINE ART

Zeichnungen, Gemälde und Skulpturen
des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts

Friedrich August von Kaulbach

1850 Munich - 1920 Ohlstadt

Friedrich August Kaulbach, together with Franz Lenbach and Franz Stuck, was one of the three most successful painters active in Munich at the turn of the twentieth century. The unparalleled popularity of their work allowed them to enjoy a princely lifestyle which gave rise to the title *Malerfürst* [prince of painters] conferred on all three by critics and the public. Like Lenbach and Stuck, Kaulbach was elevated into the nobility in recognition of his artistic achievements and contribution to the cultural life of Munich. His prestigious position as a member of the haute bourgeoisie is reflected in the magnificence of the private villa he built and lavishly furnished with valuable antiques and works of art. It provided the perfect framework for a sophisticated life in the upper echelons of society and opened the door to his extraordinary success.



Nicola Perscheid, Friedrich August
von Kaulbach

Kaulbach's skills as a portraitist brought him fame and recognition. He made no secret of his debt to the Old Masters, whose work he studied assiduously on trips to Florence, Vienna, Antwerp, Paris and London. He devoted his energies to reinventing the visual and technical approach of earlier portraitists in terms of a contemporary aesthetic rather than aiming to imitate their work. His oeuvre reflects the changes in this aesthetic over the years and displays a wide range of influences, from historicism to Art Nouveau.

His portraits represent something of a *Who's Who* of European high society from the early years of the German Empire to its collapse. They offer information about the self-perception of the political, economic and cultural elite at the turn of the twentieth century. They document the pomp and pride of high-ranking heads of state, successful entrepreneurs and brilliant inventors – and the sophisticated elegance of their consorts, a branch of portraiture in which Kaulbach excelled. The particular appeal of his painting lies both in its historical significance and in its outstanding painterly qualities – virtuosity and colouristic refinement.