

The Fourth Winter Relief Set of 1937

The designs of this striking set of stamps stand out as if they were white plaster casts against tempera backgrounds in the ceramic style of della Robbia. They were designed by Professor Ferdinand Kitt who had been a pupil of Rudolf Bacher at the Vienna Academy. In 1919 he became a member of the Vienna Secession and was its President from 1926 to 1929. In 1927 he was appointed a Professor at the Vienna Ladies Academy at St. Gilgen and he held this position until 1947. Professor Kitt mainly painted murals, frescoes, landscapes and portraits; this is the only set of stamps which he produced for the First Republic.



The set had various surcharges for winter relief as shown on top right of each stamp. It was printed by photogravure, p12½, and was issued on 18th October 1937 in the following values:

- 5g + 2g blue green "Child Welfare" (700,000)
- 12g + 3g sepia "Feeding the Children" (700,000)
- 20g + 6g deep blue "Protecting the Aged" (700,000)
- 1S + 1S carmine "Nursing the Sick" (200,000)

The top value could only be purchased at selected Post Offices and only as part of a complete set - much to the annoyance of some commentators, and customers who found that the high value was three times oversubscribed well before the date of issue. The lower values were on sale everywhere. There are discrepancies between the various catalogues, reference books and the Austrian and German Postal Decrees on the validity date for these stamps. The best conclusion is that they were officially withdrawn on 1st July 1938, but were accepted on covers until 31st October.