

Proof - Leaflet for the Mercur Bank and Foreign Exchange Office

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Accession Nr.:	MLT 919 
Artist/Maker:	Helbing, Ferenc (1870 - 1958)
Place of production:	Budapest
Materials:	paper
Dimensions:	height: 13,8 cm width: 10,2 cm

On this early Ferenc Helbing leaflet design, we see Mercury along with Fortuna holding a bag of money in front of a black background in the upper section and the necessary advertising text in the red lower section. The symbolism emphasizes the stability of the bank, with the god embodying the banking house supporting the blindfolded, red-haired goddess, contrasting financial stability with the uncertainty of luck. The composition seen on the leaflet also appeared as a poster now in the OSZK (Országos Széchényi Könyvtár – National Széchényi Library) providing a date one year earlier. The two figures of the leaflet and the arrangement is almost identical to the poster, with the only difference coming from the shorter text. The influence of the Munich Secession and German Symbolism can be seen in the imagery. Franz von Stuck's painting *The Kiss of the Sphinx*, which the Hungarian Museum of Fine Arts purchased in 1896, may have served as an inspiration.

