

## Artist Resources – Egon Schiele (Austrian, 1890-1918)



Schiele, 1918

[Schiele at Neue Galerie, New York](#)

Schiele at the [Leopold Museum, Vienna](#)

The [Neue Galerie's 2015 exhibition of Schiele's portraiture](#) was the first in the U.S. to dedicate space exclusively to the artist's influence in the genre, through over 125 drawings, paintings, and sculptures.

Author of Schiele [catalogue raisonnée \(now accessible online\)](#), Jane Kallir, [spoke in conjunction with the show](#) about the artist's rise in Vienna and relationship to the genre of portraiture. "For Schiele, portraiture entailed an excursion into the fundamental mysteries of human existence. How, ultimately, does one separate oneself, one's own subjective reactions, from the objective reality of the other....Schiele recognized identity as a fluid construct and his portraits make no attempt to be definitive...he invented a new form of portraiture that captured transitory states."

[Alessandra Comini also joined the gallery](#) to discuss Schiele's reconceptualization of traditional portraiture and rebellion against decorative Art Nouveau aesthetics. Comini described Schiele as responding to an interest in "the act of seeing within, rather than looking at, of penetrating beneath the surface" that was circulating in Vienna. In the "startling presentation" of Schiele's portraiture, "there is no frame of reference except self. The content is the self. And yet the obtainment of a natural physical likeness is not the objective. Instead Schiele is concerned with what happens to his physical likeness as it registers the impact of power inner urges and conflicting sensations."

Over 100 works on paper and paintings traced Schiele's career at [Fondation Louis Vuitton in 2018](#). The galleries traced his career chronologically in four thematic concepts exploring the decorative influence of Klimt and fin-de-siècle Vienne, Schiele's portraiture, scandal, and his career during WWI.

Also in 2018, the [Museum of Fine Arts Boston](#) and the [Royal Academy of Art in London](#) opened surveys exploring the creative influences of Schiele and his mentor Gustav Klimt through the medium of drawing.

In a series of talks in Boston in conjunction with the exhibition, [Professor Judith Bookbinder spoke](#) about the aesthetic differences of Klimt, Schiele, and Schiele's contemporary Oskar Kokoschka. Bookbinder extrapolated on the legacy of their stylistic innovation and conceptual investigations on European modernism, particularly in the work of such artists as Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, and Karl Zerbe.



Schiele, ca. 1910



Egon Schiele (Austrian, 1890-1918)  
**Sich entkleidendes Mädchen (Girl Undressing)**, 1911  
Gouache, watercolor and pencil on paper

Private Collection; L2021:160.1

*On view November 10, 2021 – February 13, 2022*

Egon Schiele (Austrian, 1890-1918)

**Liegendes Mädchen in dunkelblauem Kleid (Lying Girl in dark blue Dress), 1910**

Gouache and watercolor over pencil on paper

Private Loan; L2021:1.1

In a short but prolific career lasting just ten years, Egon Schiele produced thousands of works on paper. The innovative draftsman and painter developed a scandalous reputation through compelling, expressive, and unflinching depictions of the human body, and fearless explorations of potent themes such as death and sexuality. In 1909, inspired by encounters with the Post-Impressionist work of Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch's Expressionism, Schiele began to distance himself from the decorative Jugendstil (the German and Austrian version of Art Nouveau) styles of *fin-de-siecle* Vienna. Though he received critical acclaim in the metropolitan center, he favored a quiet creative life in the country. His predilection for recruiting young women as models and his unflinching attention to the naked human body earned Schiele a twenty-four-day prison sentence in 1912 for the perceived immorality and indecency of his work. This graphic portrait of an anonymous girl lying serenely on her back presents a rather tame Schiele on the precipice of his mature style, investigating both the human form and the human psyche. As he reflected, "erotic works of art are also sacred."

*On view February 17 – May 23, 2021*





Egon Schiele (Austrian, 1890-1918)

**Nude Self-Portrait, 1911**

Watercolor and pencil on Viennese Japan paper

Private Collection; L2020:103.3

Egon Schiele met Gustav Klimt in 1907 at the age of seventeen while enrolled at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Art) in Vienna. Despite the twenty-eight-year age difference, an intimate student-mentor relationship developed between the two innovative artists as Klimt introduced Schiele to the Vienna galleries. In 1909, Schiele founded Neukunstgruppe (New Art Group) with other students dissatisfied with the conservative aesthetics of the academy. Together they sought a new means of creative expression outside the dominant and ornate Jugendstil (literally, “young style,” but termed Art Nouveau in English) for which Klimt was celebrated. Schiele withdrew from the vibrant milieu of Vienna in 1911 for the Austrian countryside, where he focused on self-portraits and erotic scenes exploring complex themes of life, death, and sexuality. His self-portraits, often nude, are acclaimed for an unflinching yet expressive scrutiny of the human form—in Schiele’s case, emaciated and angular—matched by a penetrating internal gaze of nuanced psychological tension. Schiele’s short but prolific career was ended by the Spanish flu 1918, the same year of Klimt’s passing.

*On view December 16, 2020 – March 21, 2021*