



# EGON SCHIELE

(1890-1918)

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait Grimacing*, 1910, Albertina

- I should start with a warning that this talk contains sexually explicit images. As Egon Schiele said, "**I have made drawings and watercolours of an erotic nature. But they are always works of art.**" The YouTube guidelines make it clear that explicit content is allowed as long as is not meant to be sexually gratifying and gratifying is not a word I associate with Schiele's work as he presents us with the raw, angular complexity, one could almost say horror, of humanity.
- In his short life he took art in a new direction and laid the foundation for an approach to the representation of the body that has haunted and inspired artists ever since.

## SCHIELE QUOTES

- Egon Schiele quote, "No erotic work of art is filth if it is artistically significant; it is only turned into filth through the beholder if he is filthy."
- "I do not deny that I have made drawings and watercolours of an erotic nature. But they are always works of art. Are there no artists who have done erotic pictures?"
- "Art cannot be modern. Art is primordially eternal."
- "I shall go so far that people will be seized with terror at the sight of each of my works of 'living' art."

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Klimt / Schiele Exhibition, Royal Academy 4 November 2018 - 3 February 2019 <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/klimt-schiele>

### **NOTES FROM THE RA EXHIBITION**

- Monthly journal *Ver Sacrum* March 1898 dedicated to Klimt studies and paintings. Theseus overcoming Minotaur represents Klimt overcoming the establishment
- Schiele white gouache to highlight his studies he described as an aura which can be linked to his interest in Theosophy and the spiritual dimension.
- 1912 Prison series, Schiele was accused of abducting a 12 year old who asked him to take her to see her grandmother in Vienna and he agreed to take her. Her father filed charges of abduction and he spent 24 days in prison 21 waiting for the trial and an extra 3 days for allowing erotic images to be seen by a minor.
- *Black haired Nude Girl*, 1910, a prostitute, the age of consent was 14 in Vienna.
- Unlike Klimt, Schiele could not afford professional models and used friends.
- Schiele had an almost religious passion for nature and landscape but his bohemian attire meant he was not welcome in the villages.
- Schiele's mature career only lasted from 1909 to 1918.
- Schiele's *Nude Self-Portrait*, 1916 with his genitals exposed represents not him by everyman.
- Klimt *Dialogue of the Courtesans*, 1907, a book of erotic images.

### **HANDOUT AT THE RA EXHIBITION**

#### **1862—92: KLIMT'S EARLY YEARS**

On 14 July 1862 Gustav **Klimt is born** in Baumgarten, a village then on the **outskirts of Vienna**. From 1876 to 1883 he studies drawing and decorative painting at the recently opened Viennese Kunstgewerbeschule (**Vienna School of Applied Arts**). In 1880, with his brother Ernst and fellow student Franz Matsch, he co-founds the Künstler-Compagnie, **an artists' cooperative**. They **receive state commissions** for wall and ceiling paintings in Austria,

Germany and Switzerland, including a decorative scheme sanctioned by Emperor Franz Joseph I for his new residence near Vienna. These in turn lead to the prestigious commission to decorate the new Burgtheater with scenes from the history of theatre (1886—87). For this the three artists receive the highest imperial honour, the **Golden Cross of Merit**, in 1888. The collaboration lasts until Ernst's death in December 1892.

### **1890—1906: SCHIELE'S EARLY YEARS**

- On 12 June 1890 Egon **Schiele is born** at Tulln, **twenty miles outside Vienna**. His **talent for drawing** emerges while he is at **primary school**. His earliest drawings depict locomotives at the local railway station where his **father Adolf is stationmaster**. In September 1904 Schiele travels with his father to Krumau, in southern Bohemia, his first visit to his mother Marie's birthplace and a location that will later inspire many of his most important town- and landscapes. After the family's move to Klosterneuburg in 1904, **Adolf dies** on New Year's Eve, and Schiele's **prosperous uncle**, Leopold Czihaczek, is **appointed the fourteen-year-old's guardian**. Schiele continues drawing with the encouragement of his school art teacher Ludwig Karl Strauch, and the painter Max Kahrer. Gaining reluctant approval from his uncle to pursue further artistic training, in October 1906 Schiele enters **Vienna's foremost art school**, the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, where he is the youngest student in his year.

### **KLIMT AND THE SECESSION**

- In **1897 Klimt co-founds the Secession** and becomes its first president. Other founder-members include the painter Carl Moll, the designer Koloman Moser and the architects Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffmann and Joseph Maria Olbrich, the last-named responsible for the design of the **Secession's new building** with its crowning gilt iron cupola. The aim of this new group is to find an **alternative to the historicist aesthetic of the Ringstraße**, the boulevard that encircles the old centre of Vienna. From January 1898 the Secession publishes the monthly journal *Ver Sacrum*, which features many of Klimt's drawings and designs during the six years of its publication. In November **1903 the Secession committee dedicates its eighteenth exhibition to Klimt**, who designs the exhibition poster and **presents 80 of his works**. A **severe rift in 1905** between the Secession members over the group's direction leads Klimt and his supporters to take their leave. The resulting '**Klimt-Gruppe**' later organises the influential

Viennese Kunstschau (International Art Show) exhibitions.

### **KLIMT'S SCANDAL: THE FACULTY PAINTINGS**

- In **1894**, Klimt receives an important public commission to provide **three allegorical paintings** depicting ***Philosophy, Medicine and Jurisprudence*** for the ceiling of the auditorium of the **University of Vienna**. *Philosophy*, Klimt's first work in this series, is shown in an unfinished state at the seventh Secession exhibition in **1900**, with an incomplete *Medicine* presented a year later. The nude figures in both fail to please the conservative patrons and cause **public outrage in Vienna**. In **1905**, in the face of relentless criticism, Klimt **returns all monies paid** to him by the state and requests to receive his completed works back. He decides not to accept any more state commissions, declaring: **'Enough of this censorship. I am taking things into my own hands. I want to make my escape.'**

### **KLIMT'S BEETHOVEN FRIEZE**

In 1902 Klimt completes his ***Beethoven Frieze*** (1900—1902). The mural, made especially for the fourteenth Secession exhibition honouring the composer — which attracts some 60,000 visitors — subsequently has a profound effect on Schiele. After the exhibition, the frieze is taken down and purchased by Viennese industrialist and collector Carl Reininghaus, who keeps it in storage. Years later, Schiele's connection with this patron means he is likely to have taken the opportunity to examine it.

### **1908—09: SCHIELE'S PROFESSIONAL BEGINNING**

- In **1908** Schiele grows **dissatisfied with the conservative teaching methods** at the Akademie. Flouting the institutions rules, he participates in his first group exhibition. presenting ten small-scale landscape paintings and drawings in the Imperial Hall of Klosterneuburg Abbey. In the same year, the Klimt-Gruppe organises the first Viennese Kunstschau, showcasing the latest of Austria's artistic production. With an entire gallery of works by Klimt. including his painting *The Foss* the exhibition leaves a **strong impression on Schiele** who is increasingly influenced by Klimt's style.
- In **1909**, at **Klimt's invitation Schiele participates** in the second Kunstschau, where he exhibits four works that reveal his admiration for the older artist — a separate drawing by Schiele from that year features the two artists together with halos. At around the same Schiele and a group of fellow classmates decide to leave the conservative Akademie and **found the**



**Neukunstgruppe.** In December **1909** this young group has **its first exhibition** at the Kunstsalon Pisko in Venna, where Schiele's work captures the attention of the eminent collector Reininghaus and the art critic Arthur Roessler. Over the next two years, the latter helps Schiele to steadily increase his artistic profile by introducing Schiele to collectors and writing articles about him.

### **1910: SCHIELE'S ARTISTIC EMANCIPATION**

- Having been entranced by Klimt **until early 1910**, from May that year Schiele spends several productive months outside Venna in Krumau, and his **own distinctive artistic voice emerges**. At the same time, his **increasingly bohemian lifestyle elicits the disapproval of his guardian**, who stops all financial support compelling Schiele to provide entirely for himself. In November, Schiele declares: **'I went through Klimt until March. Today I think I am entirely different'** Nonetheless, his **reverence for the older artist continues**, and leads to their first recorded personal meeting, and to the subsequent exchange of drawings.

### **1911—12: PRAISE AND PROVOCATION**

- **Klimt's reputation as Venna's most sought-after portrait painter** is confirmed by regular commissions from **fashionable society**. Since his first success with a painting of the young aristocrat Sonja Knips in the late 1890s, **portraiture has provided a significant part of his income**. In 1912 he is elected president of the Bund der Österreichischer Künstler, which aims to promote Austrian art outside Vienna. Klimt regularly participates in **international exhibitions**, in which he is **presented as Austria's leading artist**.
- In April **1911 the first monograph of Schiele** is published by his friend, the writer and painter Paris von Gütersloh. **Schiele's rising success** is confirmed by his **first solo exhibition** at the Galerie Miethke in Vienna, which also represents Klimt. Through Klimt's introduction, Schiele **meets the model Wally Neuzil**, who begins to sit for him and soon **becomes his lover**. In May the couple **moves to Krumau**. Due to Wally's low social-status and their brazen relationship, which offends the locals, they are unwelcome, and in August they **leave for nearby Neulengbach**. From September, Schiele is represented in Germany, through Roessler's introduction to the Munich art dealer Hans Goltz Over the next two years Goltz organises Schiele's participation in several German exhibitions, but severs ties after an

unsuccessful solo show at his own gallery.

### 1912: SCHIELE'S IMPRISONMENT

- On **13 April 1912, Schiele is arrested and jailed in Neulengbach prison** on the charges of child abduction, seduction and immorality, after he and Wally give refuge to a thirteen-year-old girl who has run away from home. At his trial three weeks later the first two charges are dropped, but Schiele is sentenced to three more days in prison on the count of 'public immorality, having exposed a minor to the nude drawings on view at his studio'. The authorities **confiscate 125 drawings and in a dramatic gesture, the judge burns one**. After a total of 24 days in prison, Schiele is released on 7 May, and decides to return to Vienna.

### 1912—1914: SCHIELE BACK IN VIENNA

- Scarred by his prison experience and financially strapped, in November 1912 Schiele eventually finds a studio to rent in Vienna's thirteenth district not far from where Klimt had moved his own premises the previous year. **Schiele gains a number of new patrons:** the restaurateur and modern art lover **Franz Hauer**, and, through Klimt's introduction, the industrialist August Lederer and his wife Serena, whose son Erich later becomes an important collector of Schiele's work.
- In January **1913 Schiele is elected** a member of the Bund der Österreichischer Künstler. Over the next couple of years, he widens his **international exposure by participating in exhibitions across Europe**, including non-German-speaking countries for the first time. However, **his prices are a fraction of Klimt's**, and his **financial situation remains precarious**. Attempting to establish an additional source of income, in March and April 1914 Schiele takes lessons in woodcut and etching, but quickly gives it up as too time-consuming. **He starts courting Edith Harms**, whose **respectable middle-class family** live opposite his studio. Schiele **separates from Wally** in November, yet continues to use her as a model. In December, his second Viennese exhibition is staged at the Galerie Arnot.

### 1914—18: THE FIRST WORLD WAR

- **The outbreak of war** initially has little impact on both artists: aged 52, **Klimt is too old for conscription, and Schiele fails two army medicals**. But after a third test, in May 1915, **Schiele is pronounced fit** for service. Before beginning his military training, on 17 June **Schiele marries Edith**, who

insists that he gives up Wally as a model. Despite Schiele's deployment away from the Front and his commitment to pursuing his art, the constraints of military life cause his artistic output to drop considerably.

- In 1916 Klimt and Schiele **both participate in an exhibition at Berlin's Wiener Kunstschau**, where their paintings hang opposite one another. From March, Schiele is stationed as a military clerk at the prisoner-of-war camp in Mühling, Lower Austria. Here he produces numerous portraits of Russian captives, as well as landscapes and nature drawings. *Die Aktion*, a Berlin-based avant-garde magazine, devotes a special issue to Schiele in September, which includes reproductions of his drawings and writing by the artist.
- In summer 1917, Schiele participates in the Kriegsausstellung (War Exhibition) in Vienna with Paris von Gütersloh. In the autumn he is instrumental in the eventual purchase of Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze* by the Lederer family, which he has been helping to orchestrate since 1915. To rebuild the arts after the war, Schiele develops the idea of establishing a new artists' association similar to the Secession, called 'Kunsthalle', which gains great approval from Klimt and other contemporaries, but lacks the funds to get off the ground.

### **1918: THE FINAL YEAR**

- On 11 January **1918 Klimt is hospitalised after a stroke**. He **dies of pneumonia** on 6 February, and Schiele makes three final drawings of him in the morgue. Following Klimt's death, **Schiele is invited to organise the Secession's forty-ninth exhibition**. In April, approval comes through for Schiele's transfer to the Heeresmuseum (Army Museum) in Vienna, enabling him to fulfil his military responsibilities while **devoting considerably more time to his art**. In July, after failing to rent Klimt's now-vacant studio, he takes on new premises, still in the thirteenth district, with the intention of turning his old studio into an art school.
- Just before the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the end of the First World War in November, **Edith contracts the flu in the fatal influenza pandemic**. She dies on 28 October, **six months pregnant**. **Schiele too falls ill, and dies three days later**, on 31 October.

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), photograph age 16 with palette



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-portrait*, 1906, charcoal, 45.5 x 34.6 cm, Albertina

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), photograph age 16 with palette

- **Egon Schiele** (1890-1918) was born in Tulln, Lower Austria, about 50km from Vienna. His father, Adolf Schiele, was the **station master of Tulln**. As a child, Schiele was fascinated by trains, and would spend many hours drawing them, to the point where he was so obsessed that his father destroyed his sketchbooks. He had an unloving, uncaring mother and was a **shy and reserved child who did poorly at school**. He displayed **incestuous tendencies** towards his sister Gertrude to the extent that on one occasion his father smashed down a locked door as Schiele and his sister were alone in the room but they were developing a photographic film and so had locked the door. However, when he was 16 he took the 12 year-old child away without permission and spent a night with her in a hotel in Trieste.
- This was a year or two after his father died from syphilis. Schiele became a ward of his overbearing, maternal uncle, also a railway official. He wanted Schiele to follow in his footsteps, and was distressed at his lack of interest in academia. He despised his interest in art but, in the end, reluctantly allowed him an art tutor.

## NOTES

## BIO:SHIELE

- **Egon Schiele** (1890-1918) was born in Tulln, Lower Austria, about 50km from Vienna. His father, Adolf Schiele, was the **station master of Tulln**. As a child, Schiele was fascinated by trains, and would spend many hours drawing them, to the point where his father destroyed his sketchbooks. When Schiele was 14/15 years old, his father died from syphilis, and he became a ward of his overbearing, maternal uncle, also a railway official. Although he wanted Schiele to follow in his footsteps, and was distressed at his lack of interest in academia, he despised his interest in art but reluctantly allowed him a tutor. He had an unloving, uncaring mother and was a **shy and reserved child who did poorly at school**. He displayed **incestuous tendencies** towards his sister Gertrude and when he was 16 he took the 12 year-old child away without permission and spent a night with her in a hotel in Trieste.
- Often linked with Gustav Klimt, Schiele was 28 years younger. He was **the youngest student ever to enrol at the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts when he was 15 and then the Fine Art Academy** when he was 16, but after three years he was dissatisfied with the ultra-conservative teaching and left. **Sickness, insanity, death and the progress of his father's death from syphilis haunted him.**
- In **1907, aged 17**, he sought out Klimt who generously helped younger artists. Schiele became an **enfant terrible**, once received a goal sentence for **child pornography when he was 22**. He left the Academy as he found it too conservative. Many found his nudes too disturbing. He is an early exponent of Expressionism (invented in 1910 as the opposite of Impressionism). **Sickness, insanity and death the progress of his father's death from syphilis haunted Schiele.**
- In **1911** he met 17 year-old **Walburga 'Wally' (pronounced 'vally')** **Neuzil** who had modelled for Klimt. They moved to Neulengbach west of Vienna but were driven out by the villagers for using young village girls as models. He was **arrested for erotic drawings** of young girls. He **married Edith Halms** on 1915 and expected to carry on seeing Wally but when explained she left immediately and never saw him again. He was called up for **active service** and because of his weak heart he never saw any action. He returned to Vienna in 1917 a mature artist whose **output was enormous** and he became an **acclaimed portrait painter**. He had 50 works accepted for an exhibition. At the peak of his fame **Spanish Flu** reached Vienna and his **wife died followed three day later by Schiele.**

- At 16 Schiele was **the youngest student ever to enrol at the Vienna Fine Arts Academy** but after three years he left dissatisfied with the teaching. He set up the New Art Group and held exhibitions and the critic and writer Arthur Roessler introduced him to important collectors.
- His first love was Margarete Partonek, the daughter of a teacher.
- He wasn't afraid of female sexual power, Jonathan Jones in the Guardian wrote, "Schiele...is a feminist who **puts women at the centre of art**. He is a lover, not a hater."
- Schiele met his muse Valerie (Wally) Neuzil in 1911 and they moved to Neulengbach west of Vienna. His studio became a gathering place for children and he was accused of seducing a young girl. After spending 24 days in jail he was released. He was deeply traumatized by this event and children rarely appeared in his work again.
- **His most expensive work sold at auction is a landscape which sold for nearly \$40 million.**
- **Wally Neuzil** was born in August of 1894 in the Lower Austrian town of Tattendorf; her background was firmly lower-middle class. Her father Josef Neuzil, from a town in what is now the Czech Republic, was a grammar school teacher for a time, a position that, if not well-paid, was at least well-regarded. After her father's early death, Neuzil apparently moved with her remaining family to Vienna in 1906 and met Schiele in 1911 at the age of 16. The story goes that she was Gustav Klimt's model and perhaps even mistress, but any alliance to the elder painter remains unprovable hearsay.
- Schiele saw **Edith Harms** outside his window in a Viennese suburb and he chose to marry her rather than his mistress Wally, a former model and prostitute. He suggested to Wally they continue to see each other once a year but she refused and they never met again. In 1915 Egon and Edith married and four days later he was drafted into the army. During the war he continued to work on his art while guarding Russian prisoners. By **1917** he was able to completely work on his art and was invited to participate in the 49<sup>th</sup> Secession exhibition. In **1918** Spanish flu spread across Europe and a local Viennese newspaper reported 2,200 deaths in a single week. Edith was six months pregnant when she died and three days later Egon died.

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Reclining Female Nude*, 1908, pencil and chalk on paper, 22.1 x 36.4 cm



Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), *Floating Woman with Outstretched Arm*, c. 1900-01, black chalk on paper, Albertina, Vienna

Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), *Floating Woman with Outstretched Arm*, c. 1900-01, black chalk on paper, Albertina, Vienna

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Reclining Female Nude*, 1908, pencil and chalk on paper, 22.1 x 36.4 cm

- Schiele **moved to Vienna in 1906** to study at the Academy of Fine Arts and found **a city caught between the traditional and the modern**.
- Convinced of his own talent and the importance of the artist's role in society, he looked to the **example of Austria's most famous artist Gustav Klimt** (1862-1918), some **twenty-eight years** older than Schiele.
- (CLICK) Klimt became a well known artist in his 20s painting complex ceiling schemes for grand buildings of Vienna's Ringstraße (the boulevard that encircles the old city centre). This drawing was in preparation for a mural at the University of Vienna but the final result was regarded as too erotic and resulted in a public scandal and no more state commissions. Despite this Klimt remained the leading artist in Vienna.
- **So, in 1907, when he was only 17, Schiele sought out Klimt who became an early mentor and introduced him to patrons, models and the work of other artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch.**
- **Schiele left the Academy in protest after one year** as he found the teaching too conservative and traditional. He **formed a New Art Group that held several exhibitions** and he explored new techniques, jagged contours and a more sombre palette. He gradually moved away from Klimt's more decorative

Art Nouveau decorative style although they remained close until Klimt's death in 1918.

### SCHIELE MEETS KLIMT

- For both **Klimt and Schiele it was a fundamental daily activity**, especially drawing from life. A medium of spontaneity and creativity, it also proved central to their artistic dialogue. It is unclear when the two artists **first met in person**. Schiele later claimed that it was **in 1907** but given that he was an unknown student at the time, this is **rather unlikely**. Klimt's presentation at the 1908 Kunstschau (International Art Show) - including his iconic Golden Period work *The Kiss* - proved a revelation for Schiele. Between **November 1910 and January they visited one another's studios several times** and exchanged drawings. When Klimt died of pneumonia following a stroke in February 1918, Schiele visited the morgue to draw his body. On 31 October, Schiele succumbed to the influenza pandemic.
- Klimt's career led him to reject the conventional style of these public commissions. becoming the leading figure of an avant-garde that embraced the idea of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk', the total work of art. Architecture, sculpture, painting, design and decorative arts, freed from any hierarchy, would function together in harmony.
- In **1894**, an increasingly **sought-after Klimt** received a **major state commission** to paint three 4.5 x 3 metre allegories of **Philosophy, Medicine and Jurisprudence**, known as the 'Faculty Paintings', for a new building at the **University of Vienna**. Working from life with male and female models, Klimt **rejected idealised formulas** for allegorical figures, instead exploring the expressive potential of poses and gestures, even delving into existential states. The immediacy of drawing was instrumental to **Klimt's emotive invocation of procreation, birth and death** in **Medicine**, going far beyond the technical procedure of planning a composition. The resultant paintings were **deemed entirely inappropriate** for their context and caused a **public scandal**. Amid this, in **1902** the **Secession** realised their ambition of a 'Gesamtkunstwerk', with an exhibition dedicated to the **composer Beethoven**. Klimt's contribution was a high-level 2.5 x 34 metre **frieze** that, influenced by **Japanese art**, made bold use of blank spaces, line and pattern. The **horizontal narrative, which unfolds around four walls**, visualised **Richard Wagner's interpretation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony**. Klimt drew upon mythological iconography

to depict **humankind's negotiation of temptations in search of happiness**. Recent research by Klimt specialist Marian Bisanz-Prakken suggests that in early 1910 Schiele might have seen Klimt's original Beethoven Frieze in storage (temporarily exhibited in Vienna before Schiele lived there), as well as related drawings owned by a prominent mutual patron.

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Egon Schiele (1890-1918), *Seated Female Nude, Elbows Resting on Right Knee*, 1914, graphite and gouache on Japan paper. 48 x 32 cm. The Albertina Museum, Vienna



Gustav Klimt, *Standing Female Nude (Study for 'The Three Gorgons', 'Beethoven Frieze')*, 1901, black chalk on packing paper. 45.3 x 31 cm, The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), *Standing Female Nude (Study for 'The Three Gorgons', 'Beethoven Frieze')*, 1901, black chalk on packing paper. 45.3 x 31 cm. The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Egon Schiele (1890-1918), *Seated Female Nude, Elbows Resting on Right Knee*, 1914, graphite and gouache on Japan paper. 48 x 32 cm. The Albertina Museum, Vienna

- **1910, when he was 20**, was the year that Schiele broke away and **found his own unique style**. In a letter from November of that year, he wrote: **'I went through Klimt until March. Today I think I am entirely different.'**
- Schiele new found style was more angular, more sexually explicit with unusual and unconventional poses.

### COMPARISON WITH KLIMT

- At first glance, **Schiele's approach to drawing differs significantly** from Klimt's. His **sheets are not studies but completed works**, and take in a **wider range of subjects**. It was in **sketchbooks** that Schiele worked out his ideas for oil paintings. Schiele frequently used watercolour and gouache in his works on paper, but rarely to create three-dimensional modelling. **Colour is employed expressively** or as a graphic compositional device, similar to Klimt's division of decorative surface pattern in his paintings. **The line remains the organising principle and energetic force** of Schiele's works on paper.
- Klimt's drawings **usually relate to his painted works**. He trained at the Viennese School of Applied Arts (Kunstgewerbeschule), but his preparatory

process echoed that promoted by the Academy of Fine Arts (Akademie der Bildenden Künste), which Schiele attended. Studies of specific elements, compositional drawings, and sometimes oil sketches would be undertaken.



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Female Nude*, 1910, pencil, black chalk, watercolour and gouache with white gouache heightening on packing paper. 44 x 30.5 cm. The Albertina Museum, Vienna



Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), *Beethoven Frieze*, 1902, Secession Building, Vienna

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Female Nude*, 1910, pencil, black chalk, watercolour and gouache with white gouache heightening on packing paper. 44 x 30.5 cm. The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), *Beethoven Frieze*, 1902, Secession Building, Vienna

- Schiele's figures are **closely observed from life**. Defined by **emphatic and heightened outlines**. Unlike Klimt, Schiele **could not afford professional models** and relied on **family, friends, street children and prostitutes**. His figures confront us, they are never shy and retiring they are always full on.
- (CLICK) There is a connection with the gaunt, angular bodies of Klimt's earlier *Beethoven Frieze*, part of which is shown here. However, Schiele does not select types to represent universal themes as Klimt did, Schiele's drawings **scrutinise the individual** before him. Isolated in the void of the blank paper, sometimes **dramatically cropped, people appear alienated** from any context, yet Schiele's **strong identification with his sitters** is always evident.
- We do not get the everyday with Schiele or a full range of human emotions and his figures never symbolise something else as they do with Klimt. We are confronted with a fierceness and a tension that is projected out at us from an emaciated body or part of a body that cannot be ignored. With other artists you can walk down a row of drawings nodding and stopping to examine one. With Schiele each one grabs you and will not let you go. We may not even like them, we can call them outrageous but we cannot ignore them.

## SCHIELE'S NEW WORLD



- Schiele had grown up in rural Austria and had an **almost religious passion for nature**. from he frequently left Vienna to **paint landscapes, townscapes and draw local people**, but his bohemian lifestyle was often unwelcome in these communities, In 1912 he was imprisoned for 24 days on later dismissed charges of child abduction and seduction. The episode only deepened Schiele's belief in the sanctity of freedom of artistic expression, as can be seen from the drawings he made while incarcerated.

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of Dr Hugo Koller*, 1918, 140.3 × 110 cm, Belvedere, Vienna



Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, 1903-07, 140 × 140 cm, Neue Galerie, New York

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of Dr Hugo Koller*, 1918, 140.3 × 110 cm, Belvedere, Vienna

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, 1903-07, 140 × 140 cm, Neue Galerie, New York

- These are two later works from each artist.
- **Klimt** was a favoured choice of **society women**, and he completed many oil paintings in his **signature square format and decorative style**.
- **Schiele needed patrons**, and portraiture was an obvious direction to pursue. He **attempted this plan**, initially billing himself as '**the Silver Klimt**', **Schiele's radical approach to the human figure** was unacceptable to **wealthy clients**.
- It was only in the **last year of his life** that he gained **unsolicited society commissions as we see her with his *Portrait of Dr Hugo Koller***. Until then, his focus remained on portraying his **close circle of family, friends and a small number of male supporters**.

### PORTRAITS AND SELF-PORTRAITS

- For both Klimt and Schiele, **portraits constituted a significant part of their body of work**.
- **Klimt** was a favoured choice of **society women**, and he completed many oil paintings in his **signature square format** at the same time as his mural works. His **highly animated, quickly sketched preparatory drawings** express an elegant modernity and sense of fashion. Whereas in most European capitals



**portraiture was in decline** following the advent of **photography**, in **Vienna it was in vogue**, with the burgeoning middle classes seeking to declare their newly gained status and sense of belonging as collectors.

- As an emerging artist, **Schiele needed patrons**, and portraiture was an obvious direction to pursue. The architect Otto Wagner advised him: **'Paint portraits of famous Viennese personalities, at least a dozen [...] exhibit these likenesses collectively. This will get you noticed, and you may gain fame at once and win commissions and buyers for your other paintings.'**
- Although he **attempted this plan**, initially billing himself as **'the Silver Klimt'**, **Schiele's radical approach to the human figure** from 1910 was at **odds with the aesthetic expectations of wealthy clients**. It was only in the **last year of his life** that he gained **unsolicited society commissions**. Until that time, Schiele's focus remained on portraying his **close circle of family, friends and a small number of male supporters**. A few these acutely observed works appear amid the Klimt drawings here, with a further selection in the second half of this gallery.
- The portraits of Maria (shown here) is from the last year of his life when he achieved some commercial success. We shall see that he was not always so conservative and respectable.

## **NOTES**

- A comparison of the work of the two artists.
  - **Self-Portraits**. There are no self-portraits of Klimt but many of Schiele. Schiele's self-portraits concentrate on sight, the gaze and blindness. He identified with St. Francis of Assisi because of his poverty, his love of nature and his spiritual approach. Klimt shunned publicity and avoided socialising.
  - **Decorative v. Expression**. Klimt is recognised by his flat, decorative spaces and his symbolism. He drew as a precursor to painting. Schiele was raw emotion, often sexual and unconventional. He drew as an end in itself and sold many of his drawings. Both are now seen as pioneers of twentieth-century Modernism.
  - **Drawing from Life**. Drawing was key to both artists particularly life drawing. Both were outstanding draughtsmen. Both artists drew unconventional, sexual poses particularly Schiele.

- **Conventional v. Outrageous.** Klimt , particularly when he started his career was recognised as the leading artist in Vienna, won prizes and was a society portrait painter. Schiele was arrested for abducting a minor and imprisoned for his pornographic drawings.

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Bildnis Wally Neuzil, Portrait of Wally Neuzil*, 1912, 32 × 39.8 cm, Leopold Museum

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Bildnis Wally Neuzil, Portrait of Wally Neuzil*, 1912, 32 × 39.8 cm, Leopold Museum

- In **1911 (aged 21)** he met 17 year-old **Walburga 'Wally' (pronounced 'valley') Neuzil** who had modelled for Klimt and may have been his mistress.
- This is perhaps her best known portrait. Her lowered head, auburn hair and bright blue eyes looking directly out at us.
- This painting was owned by Lea Bondi Jaray (1880-1969), a Jewish art dealer. She was forced to hand her gallery and its contents over to a Nazi collaborator and she fled to London in 1939 and lived until 1969. After the war it was seized by US forces and handed to the Austrian government and it ended up in the Leopold Museum in Vienna. In 2009 a court case was brought by her heirs and it was ruled that the ownership must be transferred to the heirs. The Leopold agreed they would pay the heirs \$19 million for the painting and had to sell a Schiele landscape to pay for it.

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- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait\\_of\\_Wally](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_of_Wally)
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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Krummau, Crescent of Houses*, 1915, 109.7 × 140 cm, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Krummau, Crescent of Houses*, 1915, 109.7 × 140 cm, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

- Schiele began to enjoy modest success and he had his **first solo exhibition in Vienna in 1911**. His work was increasingly sexual and often **lewd studies of young women** and he controversially used **young girls as models**. He lived briefly in **his mother's hometown of Krumau in Southern Bohemia**, shown here, where his practice of having young children visit his studio attracted **disapproval from the local townspeople**.
- Schiele is best known for his angular, naked bodies but he also painted many landscapes. I will show you more later.
- Schiele and Wally were driven out of the town by the residents, who strongly disapproved of their lifestyle, including his use of the town's teenage girls as models. They moved to Neulengbach, 35 km (22 mi) west of Vienna looking for an inexpensive studio and again his studio became a gathering place for the local children.

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- <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2018/06/01/egon-schiele-was-not-a-sex-offender>





Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *The One Orange Was The Only Light*, 19-4-1912, 1912, watercolour and pencil on japan paper, 31.5 x 47.8 cm, Albertina

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *The One Orange Was The Only Light*, 19-4-1912, 1912, watercolour and pencil on japan paper, 31.5 x 47.8 cm, Albertina

- A teenage runaway asked them to take her to her grandmother in Vienna but once in the city she changed her mind, and the three returned a day later. By then, however, the teenager's father had filed charges of kidnapping and statutory rape, which led the police to conduct a thorough investigation of the artist.
- On searching his studio the police found hundreds of drawings they regarded as pornographic and he spent 24 days in prison. At the trial the kidnapping and rape charges were dropped but he was found guilty of exhibiting erotic images in a place accessible to children. It is not clear if he showed them to a minor or if the drawings were present in the same room. The judge burnt one of his drawings in court but as he had already spent 21 days in prison and was sentenced to just an extra 3 days.
- This is one of the many sketches he made of the prison cell. He was deeply traumatised by this event and stopped **using children as models**. The sexual explicitness of his drawings of adults increased following his release from prison.
- Some people **reject all of Schiele's art** because of what most believe to be his incestuous relationship with his sister and his drawings of naked young girls. This is a difficult area for anyone who lectures on art as there are many artists who are **misogynistic, racist, homophobic** or have engaged in other repellant behaviour. I try to present the facts as best I know them to let you decide.



Egon Schiele (12 June 1890 – 31 October 1918), *Nude Self-Portrait, Grimacing*, 1910, pencil, charcoal, brush and gouache, 55.8 x 36.7 cm, Albertina

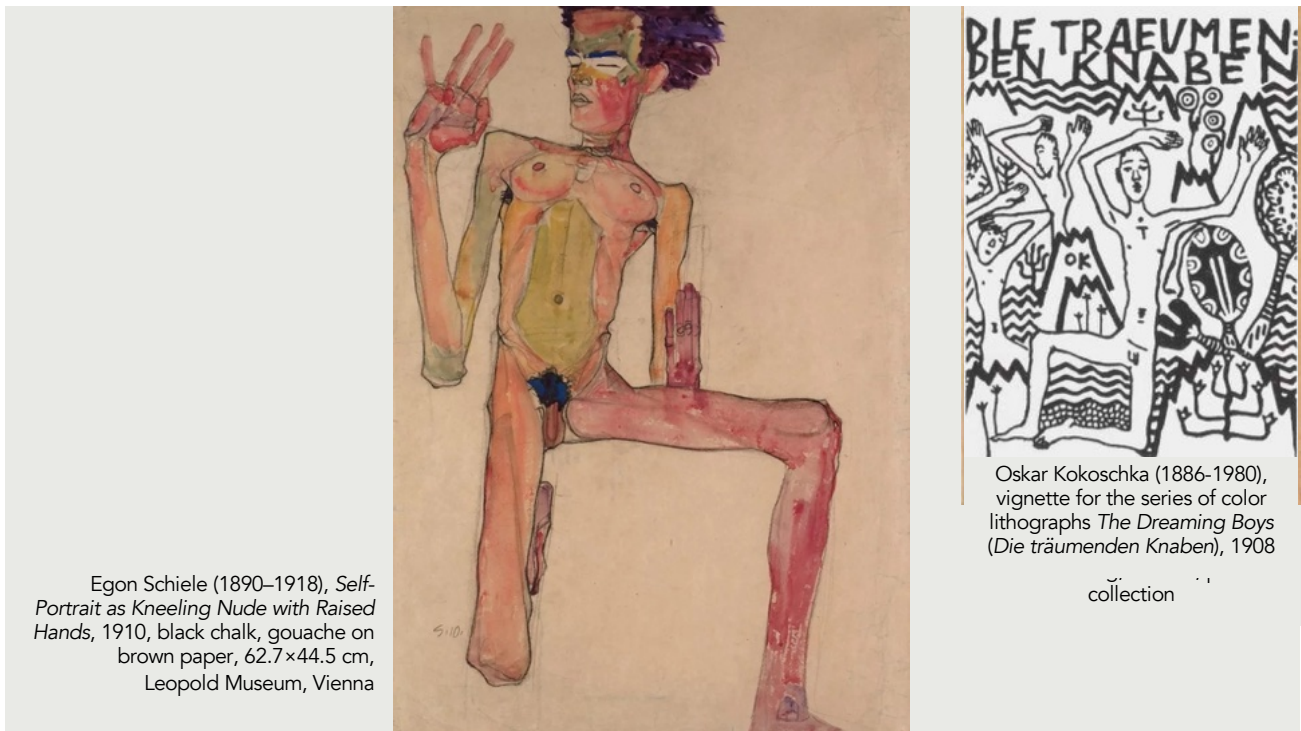
Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait Grimacing*, 1910, pencil, charcoal, brush and gouache, 55.8 x 36.7 cm, Albertina, Vienna

Gustav Klimt (14 July 1862 – 6 February 1918), *The Kiss (Lovers)*, 1907–1908, oil and gold leaf on canvas, 180 × 180 cm, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

- Schiele was forever exploring the human body and its many psychologically tormented moods with poses that accentuate the pain. This is a well known image and a good example of his figure studies—bony, angular, wild eyed, staring and twisted, his figures seem to express the angst of the modern world.
- We have seen how Klimt can be recognised by his flat, decorative spaces and his symbolism and, for a ten-year period, for his gold backgrounds. Klimt typically drew as a precursor to painting but Schiele drew as an end in itself and sold many of his drawings as finished works.

## **REFERENCES**

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/483438> a different image but relevant text



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait as Kneeling Nude with Raised Hands*, 1910, black chalk, gouache on brown paper, 62.7×44.5 cm, Leopold Museum, Vienna

Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), vignette for the series of color lithographs *The Dreaming Boys (Die träumenden Knaben)*, 1908

collection

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait as Kneeling Nude with Raised Hands*, 1910, black chalk, gouache on brown paper, 62.7×44.5 cm, Leopold Museum, Vienna

Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), *Nude with Back Turned*, ink, gouache and chalk drawing, c. 1907, private collection

Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), vignette for the series of colour lithographs *The Dreaming Boys (Die träumenden Knaben)*, 1908

- This self-portrait has been described as **among the most significant nude artworks of the 20th century**. Schiele said, "I shall go so far that people will be seized with terror at the sight of each of my works of 'living' art."
- (CLICK) It is interesting though to examine the influence of another artist on his work. This is by Oskar Kokoschka who studied at the same University of Applied Arts in Vienna from 1904 to 1909 when it was under the influence of the Secession Movement and this is one of his works from that period.
- (CLICK) Even more relevant is this lithograph by Kokoschka, *The Dreaming Boys*, it, in turn, was "**strongly influenced by Mycenaean works of art**". The figures reflect those on a Mycenaean silver pouring vessel and Schiele was clearly inspired by the same angular movements but has altered the position of the leg and the arms.
- When we see these works in isolation the multitude of influences impinging on the artist from day to day are completely lost. I feel that to uncover a few adds depth to an otherwise puzzling pose. I certainly don't mean that these artists

copied each other, I mean that all these images were part of the culturally atmosphere that inspired their work. I also believe that a great artist can produce work that **transcends their own time and culture**. Schiele put it better, he said, "**Art cannot be modern. Art is primordially eternal.**".

## **REFERENCES**

See

[https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_catalogue\\_264\\_300063176.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_264_300063176.pdf)

page 68 and the influence of Mycenaean art and Kokoshka

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oskar\\_Kokoschka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oskar_Kokoschka)





Javanese shadow puppet

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of Arthur Rössler*, 1910, 99.6 × 99.8 cm, Vienna Museum



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of Arthur Rössler*, 1910, 99.6 × 99.8 cm, Vienna Museum

Javanese shadow puppet, The Kodak Collection at the National Media Museum, Bradford, Science Museum Group Collection

- In 1909 Schiele met the **art critic Arthur Roessler** (pronounced 'ruhr-sler') at an exhibition and Roessler immediately recognised his talent and became **his spokesman, collector and agent**. Schiele has given Roessler a **dynamic, elegant bearing** and his turned head creates a harmony of form not present in his other more angular portraits of the period.
- (CLICK) Another influence was that Roessler gave Schiele a **Javanese shadow puppet** which he played with and with which he created angular shadow contours on the wall. The puppets may have been part of his **rethinking of the representation of the human form** as this was the period when Schiele's style change from the **decorative style of Klimt to Schiele's more angular, grotesque style**.



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait with Physalis*, 1912, 32.2 x 39.8 cm, Leopold Museum

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait with Physalis*, 1912 (aged 22), 32.2 x 39.8 cm, Leopold Museum

- This is possibly **his best-known self-portrait**. He is **22 years old** and shows us a young man who is both **self-confident and fragile**.
- This is a very well constructed drawing; every line finds its continuation or a counterpart to which it corresponds: **hair and body are both cropped by the edges** of the painting as if reflecting, **one shoulder is pulled up with the other lowered to create a counterforce to the intensely coloured red Physalis fruit** (related to the Lampion and Chinese lantern flower, *Physalis alkekengi*).
- This is 1912, the year he was imprisoned and deeply traumatised but is was nevertheless an extremely productive year.

Egon Schiele (1890–1918),  
*Woman With Black  
Stockings (Walburga Neuzil)*,  
1913, private collection



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Woman With Black Stockings (Walburga Neuzil)*, 1913, private collection

- That year he participated in exhibitions in **Budapest, Cologne and Vienna and in Munich** was exhibited alongside **Der Blaue Reiter** (the Blue Rider) group of **Expressionists including Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc**.
- Then, the following year, he had his **first solo show in Munich** and then another solo exhibition in Paris the following year. He was becoming well known as an artist.
- This is his partner Walburga or Wallay, who he had been living with for two years.

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of Edith Schiele with Striped Dress*, 1915



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of Edith Schiele with Striped Dress*, 1915

- Then, in 1914, he glimpsed from his window the sisters **Edith and Adèle Harms** who lived across the street from his studio. They were the daughters of a respectable middle-class family and Schiele decided he would marry the socially acceptable Edith. He believed he could continue his relationship with Wally after he was married but when he explained the situation to Wally, she left him immediately and never saw him again.
- He married Edith the following year 1915. It was a year after World War One had started and he had managed to avoid conscription but he was finally called up and stationed in Prague. Edith stayed in a local hotel and his commanding officer allowed them to meet occasionally.
- During the war his **output was more limited** and he started to concentrate on the **theme of mother and child**. A lack of models meant that **he often used Edith** and male models.
- He was still exhibiting across Europe and because of his weak heart and excellent handwriting he was made a clerk in a prisoner-of-war camp.
- **By 1917, he was back in Vienna** and his output was then prolific. He was invited to exhibit art the 49th Secession exhibition, held in Vienna in 1918 and had **fifty works accepted** and displayed in the main hall.

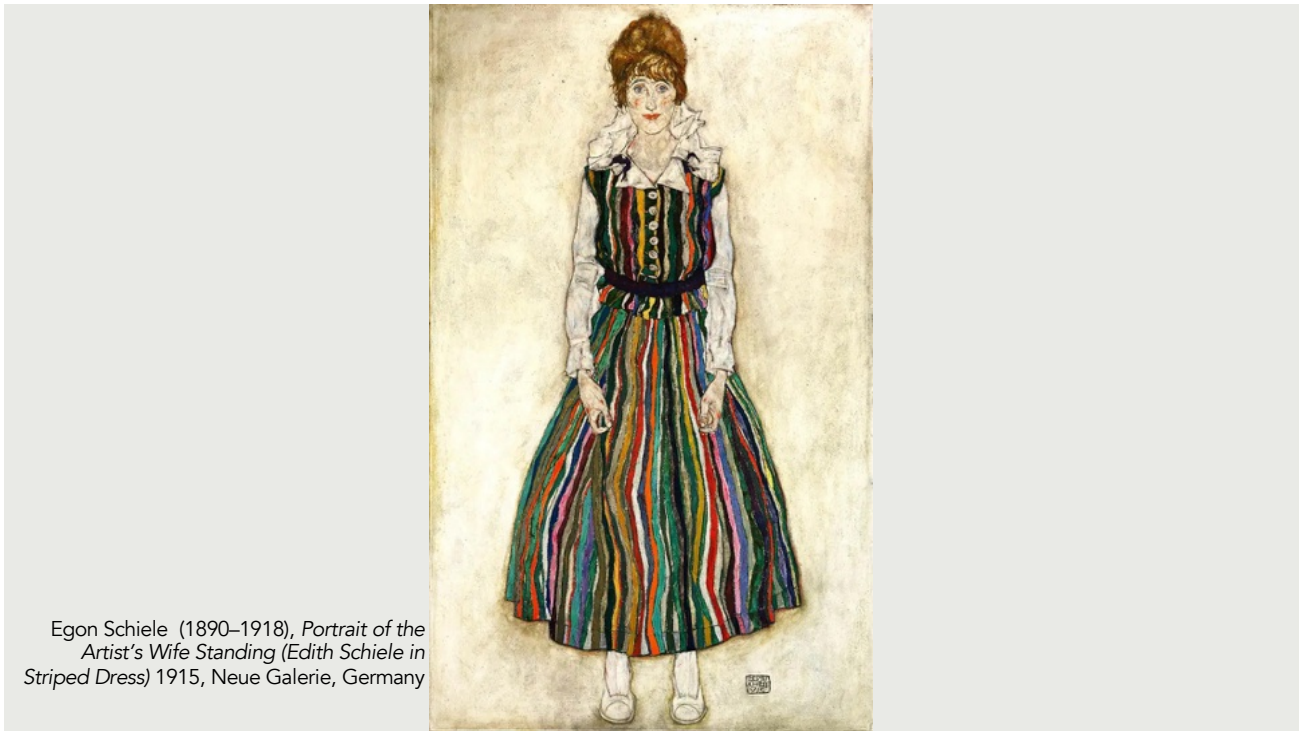
## NOTES

- He chose Edith because of her finer features over her more melancholic sister. Edith was convent educated and embarrassed about posing. Other women

including many models and her sister Adele posed for him and Edith turned a blind eye. Schiele's **new wife evidently had a maturing effect on his work**, as seen in pieces like *Lovers* (1914–15) and *Death and the Maiden* (1915).

- From about 1914 on, Schiele evolved a **more representationally accurate style of rendering**. In the process, his depictions of the female figure became **more conventionally beautiful** but **lost** something of their **frenzied intensity**. **The artist's lines**, formerly jagged and searching, **became smooth and sure**, capturing the curves of the body with unswerving accuracy, the complicated retracing, hatching, and scrolled embellishments seen in his earlier work were **replaced by single, perfect strokes**.





Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of the Artist's Wife Standing (Edith Schiele in Striped Dress)* 1915, Neue Galerie, Germany

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Portrait of the Artist's Wife Standing (Edith Schiele in Striped Dress)*, 1915, Neue Galerie, Germany

- **Schiele needed patrons**, and portraiture was an obvious direction to pursue. He **attempted this plan**, initially billing himself as '**the Silver Klimt**' but his **radical approach to the human figure** was unacceptable to **wealthy clients**. It was only in the **last year of his life** that he gained **unsolicited society commissions**. Until then, his focus remained on portraying his **close circle of family, friends and a small number of male supporters**.
- His wife Edith did not like to pose naked and this is a portrait of her in a style that he hoped would attract patrons.



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Reclining Woman with Green Stockings*, 1913



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Adele Harms*, 1917, Albertina, Vienna

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Reclining Woman with Green Stockings*, 1913

- **Growing professional success** in the last two years of his life enabled Schiele to emulate Klimt, by employing a **large number of models**. **Edith, his wife**, became **increasingly reluctant to pose** and she **put on weight** and no longer satisfied her husband's requirement for lean and fragile women.
- However, **Edith's sister, Adele**, seems to have been a willing model, and it is thought she posed for this drawing, *Reclining Woman with Green Stockings*.
- (CLICK) You can judge for yourself as this is a drawing of Adele.
- Unlike her younger sister, **Adele wasn't shy about posing**, and she would later claim that her relationship with her **brother-in-law had not been as chaste** as it should have.



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Reclining Woman*, 1917, 96 × 171 cm, Leopold Museum, Vienna

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Reclining Woman*, 1917, 96 × 171 cm, Leopold Museum, Vienna

- This painting is based on a similar watercolour drawing of his wife Edith with the same pose but with her genitals exposed and her top covered, called *Reclining Woman Exposing Herself*.
- Adele later said that Schiele **changed the appearance of her face** to disguise the fact that it was his wife and in this painting he has combined his wife's legs with the head of a professional model. Note the complex composition in this painting, the figure is at an angle to the frame and is positioned so that her left knee is near the edge of the cloth than her right knee and her right elbow overlaps the edge of the cloth.
- Another influence in **Vienna was the work of Sigmund Freud who had published essays on his theory of sexuality in 1905, new ideas about the mind and body were of great interest in science and art.** For both Klimt and Schiele, **sexuality was a topic connected to universal themes of life and death.** Their shared fascination with the subject is reflected in their drawings.

### THE EROTIC

- In Schiele wrote: **'The figure is after all the most essential, and what gives me the greatest satisfaction, the human body:** The same was true for Klimt. It was by **tirelessly drawing from life** that both artists understood the human form and wrought it to their artistic purposes.
- For both Klimt and Schiele, drawing was a highly expressive medium ideally



suited to new ideas of modernity and identity. **By 1918, as Schiele's reputation grew, so did the market for his works. On the very first afternoon of his exhibition at the Secession he sold five paintings and numerous drawings.** In his last creative year, aged just twenty-eight, he had at **least 177 sittings** with various models. His wife, six months pregnant, died three days before him.

## **REFERENCES**

- [https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_catalogue\\_264\\_300063176.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_264_300063176.pdf)  
page 322 *Reclining Woman* and page 304, *Reclining Woman Exposing Herself*, 1916



Egon Schiele (1890–1918),  
*Self-portrait*, 1911, pencil and  
watercolour on paper, 47 ×  
31 cm, Albertina, Vienna



Egon Schiele (1890–1918),  
*Lesbian Lovers*, 1914, private  
collection, Munich

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-portrait Depicting Masturbation*, 1911, pencil and watercolour on paper, 47 × 31 cm,

Albertina, Vienna

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Lesbian Lovers*, 1914, private collection, Munich

- Schiele also **addressed the then taboo themes of masturbation, sexual intercourse and homosexuality**. While Klimt's nudes are often lost in a world of sensuous abandon, Schiele's drawings confront us through the direct gazes or provocative poses that challenge any simple voyeuristic engagement.

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Death and the Maiden*, 1915, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Death and the Maiden*, 1915, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

- *Death and the Maiden* was painted around the time he had **abandoned his mistress Wally and married the more socially respectable Edith**. This painting perhaps commemorates the end of his affair with Wally Neuzil, seemingly conveying this separation as the death of true love.
- Alternatively, it may be his separation from his wife Edith. The two people **are tragically clinging to each other** in what looks like a **war zone** and he and his new wife are soon to be separated by the war so it could also be neither of them but a portrayal of the **separation and death brought about by the war**.
- The figures are awkward, bony and desperately clinging to each other. The man's staring eyes are distracted as his long, bony fingers cling to her head and her **curiously long arms made to look thinner** by the fold of the sleeve of his coat are disengaging as she holds him.

## NOTES

- "In this painting, one of Schiele's **most complex and haunting works**, the female figure, gaunt and tattered, clings to the **male figure of death**, while surrounded by an equally tattered, quasi-surreal landscape. As elsewhere in his work, in this composition Schiele combines the personal and the allegorical—in this case by turning to a theme deriving from the medieval concept of the Dance of Death that reached its height in 15<sup>th</sup>-century German art. *Death and the Maiden* was painted around the time Schiele separated from his longtime

lover, Wally Neuzil, and several months before he married his new lover, Edith Harms. The painting memorializes the end of his affair with Neuzil, seemingly conveying this separation as the death of true love. Interestingly enough, the manner in which Schiele's figures are nearly consumed by their clothing and abstracted surroundings suggests the portraiture of Klimt, who likewise placed his subjects within indecipherable environments." (The Art Story website)

## **REFERENCES**

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- <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/great-works/great-works-death-and-the-maiden-1915-16-by-egon-schiele-8456208.html>
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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Town Among Greenery (The Old City III)*, 1917, The Neue Galerie, New York

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Town Among Greenery (The Old City III)*, 1917, The Neue Galerie, New York

- Although best known for his figure drawings and paintings he was also inspired by cities and landscapes.
- He travelled across Europe during his brief career and his paintings of the **landscape** and his local towns and cities **comprise a significant portion of his work**.
- This painting was inspired in part by his **mother's hometown, Krumau**, where he lived briefly in 1911. His landscapes are often devoid of people and frequently use a **bird's-eye perspective** similar to his tendency to depict his sitters from above.
- This painting contains other elements of his style such as his **bold outlines and sharp contours**. However, unlike his portraits his landscapes are notable for their **use of and range of colour**.

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- <https://www.austria.info/en/culture/artists-and-masterpieces/egon-schiele-and-his-melancholic-landscapes>



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Houses With Colorful Laundry (Suburb II)*, 1914



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Houses With Colorful Laundry (Suburb II)*, 1914

- The painting is one of his most important landscapes. It was **sold by Sotheby's for £25m, the highest price ever paid for a Schiele painting.**
- (CLICK) It was sold by Leopold Museum to raise \$19m they had agreed to pay the heirs of Schiele's painting *Portrait of Wally*, this painting we have already seen, in order to allow the museum to keep the painting of Wally. (CLICK)
- This landscape is loosely based on the town of Krumau in which Schiele's mother was born and which inspired some of his greatest landscapes. We are looking down on the town from above and there is no depth, everything is flattened. There are no people but the presence of people is indicated by the brightly coloured laundry on the washing lines.

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Vier Bäume* (*Kastanienallee im Herbst*), *Four Trees* (*Chestnut Avenue in Autumn*), 1917, 110 × 140.5 cm, Oberes Belvedere, Vienna



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Vier Bäume* (*Kastanienallee im Herbst*), *Four Trees* (*Chestnut Avenue in Autumn*), 1917, 110 × 140.5 cm, Oberes Belvedere, Vienna

- There is a brilliant sunset on an autumn evening. The chestnut trees are slowly dying and one has lost nearly all its leaves. Despite the beautiful sunset and even though two of the trees are a closely entwined pair there is a feeling of melancholy, loneliness and death pervading the empty and silent landscape.
- We are now a year away from his death.

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- <https://eclecticlight.co/2018/10/31/radical-views-egon-schiele-5-1917-18/>

Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *The Family*, 1918, 150 × 160.8 cm, Belvedere, Vienna



Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *The Family*, 1918, 150 × 160.8 cm, Belvedere, Vienna

- In February 1918 **Klimt died** from a stroke followed by pneumonia caused by Spanish flu and **Schiele became the leading painter in Vienna**. He was now becoming successful and selling his work.
- This is one of his **last oil paintings before he died of Spanish flu in October**. The model for the woman is **not Schiele's wife, Edith** even though she was expecting their first child at the time of painting.
- Schiele originally painted a bouquet of flowers between the woman's legs but at some point he overpainted them with a child wrapped a blanket, modelled by his nephew Toni.
- This painting was exhibited at the 49th exhibition of the Vienna Secession in 1918, for which Schiele also designed the poster. The exhibition included 19 of his paintings and 24 drawings.
- On 28th October 1918 his wife Edith died of Spanish flu six months into her pregnancy and Schiele himself died three days later on 31st October, aged only 28.

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# EGON SCHIELE

(1890-1918)

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Egon Schiele (1890–1918), *Self-Portrait Grimacing*, 1910, Albertina

- In his short life he had created over **three hundred oil paintings and several thousand works on paper**. The human figure provided Schiele with his most potent subject matter for both paintings and drawings.
- It is impossible to know how his art would have progressed had he lived longer. Maybe his youthful rebellion would have matured into a **more rounded art**. He was **certainly changing and maturing** and it is likely he would have progressed much further, we shall never know.
- Thank you again for your attention and please add any comments below and I look forward to bringing you my next talk soon.