

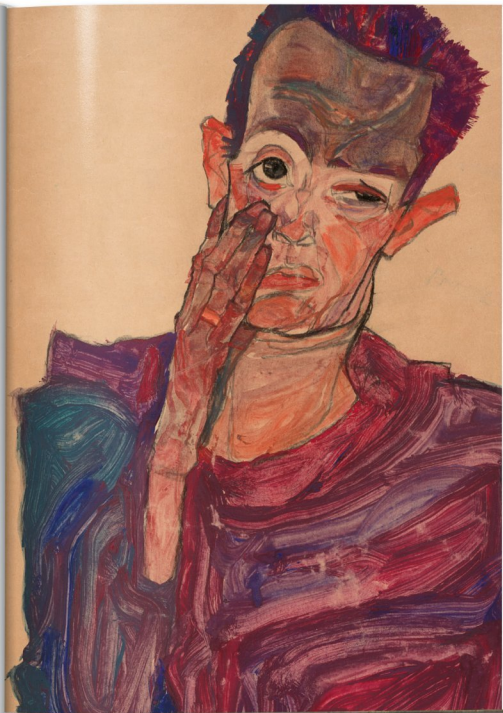
Anti-hero and Superstar

Egon Schiele or the
Incorporation of Otherness

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Egon Schiele and his oeuvre, essentially produced within the space of barely ten years, today enjoy a global presence that for a long time few could have imagined possible. The paintings and drawings of the artist who died so young evidently strike a deep chord in our own age. Exhibitions of his art develop into media events, while saleroom prices of his works soar to spectacular heights. New articles and books about him appear with every passing year and his popularity is showing no signs of waning. Egon Schiele owes this celebrity not least to his status as a "young rebel," whom he seems to embody in prototypical fashion. Fascinating parallels with screen idols such as James Dean, and similarities with glittering figures of international Pop Art such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, likewise serve to invest our perception of Schiele's art and his person with ever new layers of meaning.

Interest in Egon Schiele thus comes from many sides. This is naturally due first and foremost to Schiele himself and his unflagging preoccupation with his own person, to his captivating images, for which he accepted neither social conventions nor taboos, and to an enthralling aesthetic that is located between expression, performative staging and a search for physical identity. It is only too understandable that Schiele should become a figure of reference for artists cultivating a variety of images, such as David Bowie, or for music icon Madonna, who as a Schiele collector perhaps recognizes in his figure someone with whom she shares an inexhaustible repertoire of poses and provocations. Our perception of Schiele is also influenced, however, by the very specific milieu to which he belonged – "Vienna around 1900," without whose wealth and fertile soil he would be inconceivable. At the same time, he broadened its creative scope in a manner similar only to Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka.





Anton Josef Trčka, **Egon Schiele**, 1914
Photograph, Vienna, Imago/Austrian Archives
Self-portrait with Peacock Waistcoat, Standing (detail), 1911
(see ill. p. 139)



