

SCHIELE

Reinhard Steiner



TASCHEN

Taschen
SCHIELE (I) #BASICART

Reinhard Steiner

BA

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Un prodigio controverso

Nudi espressivi, strani movimenti

Egon Schiele (1890–1918) è il pittore che ha esercitato l'influenza più duratura sulla scena artistica viennese dopo la conclusione della grande era di Klimt. Dopo una breve parentesi nello stile di Klimt, suo mentore, Schiele mise presto in discussione, con i dipinti aspri e di difficile fruizione, la tendenza estetizzante dell'Art Nouveau viennese, orientato verso la bellezza della superficie.

Molti contemporanei trovavano brutti gli espressivi nudi e gli autoritratti di Schiele, con i loro strani movimenti e i colori macabri, perfino moralmente discutibili, una critica che culminò nella criminalizzazione del pittore come "osceno" e nella condanna, nel 1912, a cui seguì un breve periodo di detenzione. Tuttavia, nemmeno i suoi più severi detrattori potevano mettere in discussione il suo straordinario talento nel disegno. Questo libro offre una panoramica concisa della breve, brillante, carriera di Egon Schiele.

La collana:

Ciascun volume della collana Basic Art di TASCHEN comprende:

- Una sintesi dettagliata che ripercorre cronologicamente la vita e l'opera dell'artista, soffermandosi sulla sua importanza a livello storico e culturale
- Una biografia concisa
- Circa 100 illustrazioni a colori con didascalie esplicative

L'autore

Reinhard Steiner (nato nel 1950) è professore di storia dell'arte all'università di Stoccarda. I suoi interessi e le sue competenze riguardano, tra le altre cose, l'arte tardo-medievale e rinascimentale, nonché l'arte del XIX e XX secolo.

#BasicArt



The Artist's Self

Just as there are particular words or phrases (such as *décadence* or *fin de siècle*) which seem to express the very essence of an entire era, of a certain society's wishes and desires, aims and preoccupations and guiding principles, so too there are key images in every artist's work that reveal his character and the wellspring of his creative impulses most clearly of all. There may of course be reasons, of a conscious or unconscious nature, why an artist returns time and again to a specific motif, why it preoccupies his imagination, why it strikes a dominant note in his oeuvre. But we shall at any rate be entitled to see in it a focal meaning underpinning much that is expressed elsewhere in the artist's work. We are especially entitled to make this assumption when (as in the case of Egon Schiele) the motif so insistently foregrounded is the self-portrait. The huge number of about a hundred self-portraits not only shows that of all artists Schiele was one of those who observed himself most closely. It also suggests a trait in the artist that we might consider narcissistic. It is true that Schiele certainly did devote a manic scrutiny to his own person, and liked to record his own appearance and poses. But this preoccupation has a long and respected tradition in art, and we are right to hesitate before hastening to judge. A brief look at the self-portrait tradition is advisable if we are not to jump to dilettantish conclusions.

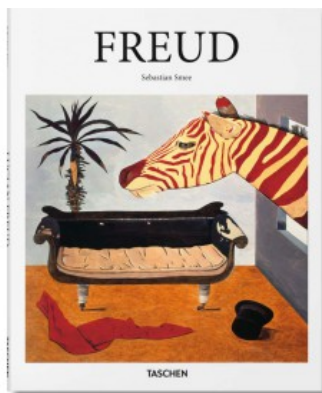
One essential component in the process of portraying the self is the mirror. Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt, to name just two of the most important painters of self-portraits, used the mirror in order to record their own appearance and so establish an autobiographical account. In Dürer's case, indeed, the artist availed himself of an aspect of the mirror which marked the beginning of a central development in the art of the modern era: the mirror was an instrument in the discovery of personal identity, making the self experientially accessible and in the process highlighting the burgeoning personal self-confidence of Renaissance visual artists. At the age of thirteen, in 1484, Dürer was already drawing a self-portrait to which he was later to add the words "likeness done from a mirror." In 1492 he recorded a passing state of melancholy in a pen and ink drawing. In further self-portraits done in 1493 and 1498 a young and well-dressed man, of confident address, aware of his station, could be seen presenting himself for inspection. At length, around 1500, Dürer painted a self-portrait in which the hieratic frontal view and the compositional similarity



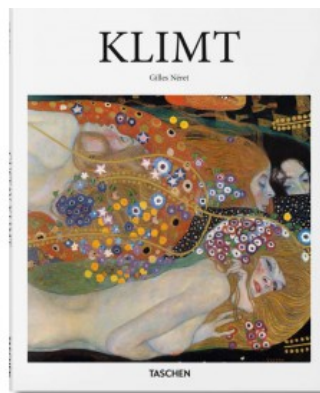
Egon Schiele in his studio, 1907

Gripping Nude Self-Portrait, 1907
Pencil, watercolour and gouache, with white highlighting, 10.8 x 28.4 cm (4 1/4 x 11 1/4 in.)
Vienna, Austria

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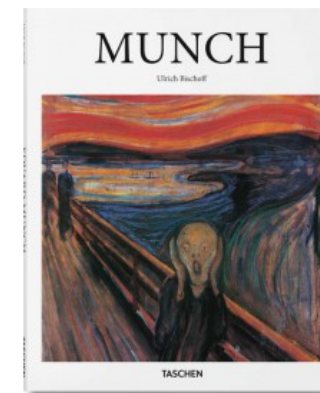
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