



Leseprobe

Dr. Elisabeth Dutz

Egon Schiele

Portrait of Dr. Erwin von
Graff

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Zum Buch

This revelatory volume uncovers the significant friendship that shaped Egon Schiele's most personal and provocative works.

Between 1910 and his death in 1918, Egon Schiele cultivated a close, formative relationship with Dr. Erwin von Graff—a Vienna-based gynecologist who would become both friend and collaborator. *Egon Schiele: Portrait of Erwin von Graff* is the first publication to examine this vital connection in depth, revealing how Graff's medical practice and personal support influenced one of the most expressive and psychologically charged bodies of work in modern art. Through Graff's private diary and newly uncovered archival material, art historian Elisabeth Dutz traces a compelling narrative of creative exchange and trust. Graff granted Schiele access to his patients—pregnant women, newborns, and postpartum mothers—opening a world that Schiele captured with raw, emotional intensity. Their friendship, which began with a painted portrait offered in gratitude for a favor, evolved into a lasting exchange that deeply influenced Schiele's exploration of the human body, emotional vulnerability, and the complexities of life and death. Published in connection with a special exhibition at the Neue Galerie New York, this beautifully produced volume is richly illustrated with Schiele's works from this period, as well as never-before-seen photographs and documents. It offers new insight into the artist's inner world and illuminates a significant chapter in his development. A must-have for admirers of Schiele, this book deepens our understanding of his oeuvre and the relationships that helped shape it.

Autor

Dr. Elisabeth Dutz

FOREWORD

Egon Schiele is one of the greatest artists in the collection of the Neue Galerie New York. We have proudly presented a number of major exhibitions on Schiele over the years, surveying his extraordinary portraits and landscapes, as well as other aspects of his brief but brilliant career.

With this publication and accompanying small exhibition, we are focusing on a single work, along with some related drawings and paintings: the *Portrait of Dr. Erwin von Graff* from 1910. This was the year Schiele really came into his own as an artist, and we consider the von Graff painting to be one of the most important works in the extended collection of Neue Galerie.

Schiele completed this portrait of a surgeon at the Second University Women's Clinic at the age of twenty. The painting of the striking thirty-two-year-old doctor somehow manages to portray the subject looking both friendly and slightly menacing, with his warm smile, but also darkened complexion and bandaged finger. Dr. von Graff, who the young artist met in Vienna at the home of collector Carl Reininghaus, became a confidant of Schiele. Von Graff generously treated, cared for, and paid the hospital bills of Schiele's pregnant friend Liliana Amon.

The doctor was among the very first to recognize Schiele's great talent, allowing the artist to visit the clinic to draw pregnant women and newborns. This was quite an uncommon practice and a sign of respect and trust between the two men. It was clear to von Graff that Schiele was deeply interested in the life cycle, which he honored with his artworks. This portrait and several works on paper were given by Schiele to the doctor in gratitude for his service.

Von Graff remained a good friend of Schiele until the very end. He even attended to Schiele in his final hours, giving him an injection to ease his suffering, as he tragically succumbed to the global flu epidemic in 1918 at the age of twenty-eight—just three nights after Edith Schiele, his six months' pregnant wife, passed away, also a victim of the epidemic.

For this publication, Dr. Elisabeth Dutz, Chief Curator of the Graphic Art Collection at the Albertina Museum in Vienna, has drawn on new research and photo material to give an in-depth overview of the von Graff painting and to provide additional context for the work. She has done a wonderful job of illuminating the close relationship between Schiele and von Graff, showing us artist and patron in spirited dialogue. We wish to thank her for her outstanding work on this publication, part of a Neue Galerie book series devoted to superb individual paintings in the collection. Our thanks also go out to Janis Staggs, Director of Curatorial and Manager of Publications, who has gathered the works on display, as well as to designer Bill Loccisano, for their important contributions.

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