Fig. 1  *Egon Schiele's Women*, the latest book by Jane Kallir (author of the catalogue raisonné *Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*) was published by the Prestel Verlag in the autumn of 2012.

Fig. 2  Egon Schiele: Seated Nude (Gertrude Schiele), 1910. Gouache and black crayon. 20 7/8 x 17 3/4". Kallir, D. 544.

Fig. 3  Egon Schiele: Wally in Red Blouse with Raised Knees, 1913. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil. 12 1/3 x 18 7/8". Kallir, D. 1335.

Fig. 4  Egon Schiele: Reclining Woman with Green Stockings (Adele Harms?), 1917. Gouache and black crayon. 11 5/8 x 18 1/8". Kallir, D. 1995.
Excerpt from the Introduction to *Egon Schiele’s Women*

The first catalogue raisonné of Egon Schiele’s work in all media, which I wrote in 1990 and expanded in 1998, was divided into two parts: a biography and the catalogue proper.¹ There were several reasons for this approach. Most of the substantive research on Schiele’s life had at that point been completed. The early memoirs by people who had known the artist, such as Heinrich Benesch and Arthur Roessler, had been analyzed and supplemented by more objective investigations.² Alessandra Comini’s 1974 book *Egon Schiele’s Portraits* was not only the first significant biography in English, but the first to incorporate information gleaned from lengthy interviews with Schiele’s surviving friends and relatives.³ Christian Mebehay’s 1979 Schiele *Dokumentation* was another major landmark, comprising the vast majority of extant letters to and from the artist, along with other contemporary written material.⁴ It therefore seemed prudent to assemble all this information in a comprehensive biography.

The biography also served as a useful complement to the catalogue raisonné, facilitating the dating of the art via coordination with concurrent events in the artist’s life. In cataloguing the art, it had become evident that Schiele not only drew very quickly, he developed at an enormous pace, especially in the years 1910 to 1915. The work unfolds in a diaristic fashion, changing almost from one day to the next. Drawings and watercolors done in early 1910 differ markedly from those done at mid-year, which likewise differ from those done in December. Schiele’s oil paintings, which took longer to complete, on the whole evidence less dramatic stylistic transitions and serve different purposes. Whereas the watercolors and drawings remain quite intimate, the oils were intended for a broader public and are often laden with heavy allegorical subtexts. It is therefore unwise to generalize about Schiele’s artistic achievements. One must always ask: What year are we talking about? Are we talking about the oils or the works on paper?

During the last several decades, the rising popularity of “Vienna 1900,” and in particular of Egon Schiele, has fostered much new research on the period. Among the more focused Schiele studies that have appeared since the publication of the 1990 catalogue raisonné are Franz Wischin’s *Egon Schiele und Krumau* and *Egon Schiele: Ich Gefangener!* (“I, Prisoner!”); Klaus Albrecht Schröder’s *Egon Schiele: Eros and Passion*; Kimberly Smith’s *Between Ruin and Renewal: Egon Schiele’s Landscapes*; the exhibition catalogues *Egon Schiele & Arthur Roessler: Der Künstler und sein Förderer* (The Artist and his Champion); *Die Tafelrunde: Egon Schiele und sein Kreis* (The Roundtable: Egon Schiele and His Circle); *Egon Schiele: Das unrettbare Ich,* (The Unsalvageable Ego); and my own *Egon Schiele: Das unrettbare Ich,* (The Unsalvageable Ego).¹⁰
is also an image of social deviation.”

Schiele’s willful, repeated violation of
the aesthetic devices that had traditionally been used to defuse representations
of the female nude unleashed the power of the feminine “other” and thereby
called into question the efficacy of rational masculine control. The transgressive
nature of Schiele’s work resides less in its content than in its form.

Many of Schiele’s nudes were covert, probably unwitting, attacks on the
dominant patriarchy. For this reason, although his work was widely collected
by male connoisseurs of erotica (both during his lifetime and later), it has
also evoked the strongest negative feelings (ranging from mild discomfort to
outrage) in heterosexual male viewers. And it is probably also for this reason
that some of the most original and objective Schiele scholarship has been
produced by women, such as Alessandra Comini, Danielle Knafo, Helena
Pereña, Renée Price, and Kimberly Smith. Although most of Schiele’s
lifetime patrons were men, American collectors such as Gertrud Mellon
and Alice Kaplan played a central role after World-War II. Last but not least,
Schiele has been a significant influence on contemporary women artists,
among them Marina Abramovic, Vanessa Beecroft, Marlene Dumas, Tracey
Emin, Nan Goldin and Sherrie Levine. As Dumas observes, “Schiele’s ....
bony young girls are more of our time than of his time .... They know what
they are doing. And they do it with their bodies.”

Egon Schiele was like the child in “The Emperor’s New Clothes,”
proclaiming a nakedness no one else dared acknowledge, though it was there
for all to see. Schiele’s women were his partners in this process. That does not
mean they were his equals; by the standards of the time, such a leap would
have been impossible. Nevertheless, Schiele could not have achieved what he
did without these models. *Egon Schiele’s Women* is their story.

The author’s latest book, *Egon Schiele’s Women*,
was published in 2012 by the Prestel Verlag.
It is also available in German:
*Jane Kallir, Egon Schiele’s Frauen.*

Jane Kallir
is author of the comprehensive catalogue raisonné
*Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*
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36 Ibidem, 346.