

Oskar Kokoschka

Enfant terrible in Vienna

23 September 2022 - 12 February 2023



The Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris is presenting the first Paris retrospective devoted to Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980). Retracing Kokoschka's seven decades of image-making, the exhibition highlights the artist's originality as we accompany him through Europe's 20th century.

Painter, writer, playwright and poet, Kokoschka stands for his committed role in the artistic and intellectual upheavals of early 20th-century Vienna. Combining a drive to convey the intensity of the moods of his time with a very real talent for provocation, from 1908 onwards he became the enfant terrible for critical circles in Vienna. Meanwhile, with the support of Gustav Klimt and Adolf Loos, he inspired a new generation of artists, among them Egon Schiele. As a portraitist of Viennese society, he brought unrivalled skill to laying bare his models' innermost being.

Shaken by his breakup with the composer Alma Mahler after a tumultuous affair between 1912 and 1914, Kokoschka joined the army when the First World War broke out, and was seriously wounded twice. He went on to teach at the art school in Dresden while seeking new forms of painterly expression as counterpoints to such other contemporary movements as Expressionism, the New Objectivity and obstruction.

A tireless traveller, during the 1920s he made trips to European countries, North Africa and the Middle East. Driven back to Vienna by financial difficulties at the beginning of the 1930s, in 1934 he was forced by the political troubles of the time to leave for Prague. When his works, condemned by the Nazis as "degenerate", were withdrawn from German museums, he braved the forces of fascism with an unrelenting commitment to the defence of freedom. Exile becoming inevitable, he found a refuge in Great Britain in 1938 and joined the international resistance movement.

After the war, he became a leading figure on the European intellectual scene and participated in the cultural reconstruction of a devastated, divided continent. He explored Greek tragedies and mythological stories in search of the sources of social ferment. Distancing himself from Germanic culture and language, he settled in Villeneuve, in French-speaking Switzerland, in 1951. The works of his last years show an uncompromising pictorial radicalism close to that of his early career. His belief in the subversive power of painting as a vehicle for emancipation and education remained unshakeable until his death.

Oskar Kokoschka: Enfant terrible in Vienna is a unique selection of 150 of the artist's most significant works, brought together with the backing of major European and American collections.

The exhibition will be on show at Guggenheim Bilbao from 17 March to 3 September 2023.

PRESS RELEASE

Museum director

Fabrice Hergott

Curators

Dieter Buchhart

Anna Karina Hofbauer

Fanny Schulmann

assisted by Anne Bergeaud and

Cédric Huss

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Oskar Kokoschka

Self-portrait, 1917

oil on canvas

79 x 63 cm

Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal

Photo Patrick Schwarz

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Visitor information

Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

11 Avenue du Président Wilson

75116 Paris

Tel. 01 53 67 40 00

www.mam.paris.fr

Open Tuesday – Sunday

10 am – 6 pm

Open late

Thursday until 9:30 pm

Admission

Full rate: 14 €

Concessions : 12 €

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