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Thomas Theodor Heine: *Simplicissimus 10 PF*. 1896. Courtesy of the Merrill C. Berman Collection and Galerie St. Etienne

NEW YORK, NY (March 9, 2020) – *Youth Style*, an exhibition of important Jugendstil posters from turn-of-the-century Germany and Austria, will open at the **Galerie St. Etienne** on March 18. Presenting some 45 works from the near-encyclopedic collection of Merrill C. Berman, the exhibition includes rare posters by Ferdinand Andri, Peter Behrens, Lucian Bernhard, Edmund Edel, Hans Rudi Erdt, Thomas Theodor Heine, Ludwig Hohlwein, Gustav Klimt, Julius Klinger, Josef Maria Olbrich, Bruno Paul, Alfred Roller, Egon Schiele, and others. The show will briefly overlap with *Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented*, an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York highlighting some of 324 avant-garde works the institution recently acquired from the Berman collection.

Dating to roughly 1895 to 1918, the uniquely Germanic interpretation of Art Nouveau that came to be known as Jugendstil found expression in all the decorative arts, but most prominently in *Flächenkunst* or two-dimensional design. *Youth Style* provides an all-embracing look at the varied styles and evolving aesthetics of this period, with promoted subjects ranging from art exhibitions and orchestral performances to car shows, shoes, cigarettes and more.

Particularly in the early years, many artists favored the use of abstract and geometric ornament incorporating negative and positive shapes with an understanding that text and images are part of a cohesive visual whole. Classic examples of this approach on view here include Alfred Roller's designs advertising exhibitions at the Vienna Secession in 1901 and 1902. Peter Behrens's *Poster for AEG Metal Filament Bulb* (circa 1907), one of the earliest examples of mass advertising using the geometric patterns synonymous with Jugendstil aesthetics, frames the humble lightbulb in a bold and unexpectedly grand fashion. As some practitioners became engaged with illustrating editorial content, spurs of the movement shifted in a more figural direction, as exemplified by Thomas Theodor Heine's numerous works for

*Simplicissimus*, a weekly magazine known for its brash content and political satire aimed at the German establishment. The bulldog, its chain broken in a now-celebrated illustration from 1896, was a signature motif in Heine's work that emphasized the magazine's assertive stance.

### **About the Merrill C. Berman Collection**

Berman's expansive collection of posters began almost by accident. Originally a self-professed collector of "name brand" art, he was forced to sell his holdings and reassess in the early 1970s. "My financial low point came just as Art Nouveau and Art Deco posters and objects were being rediscovered," he recalls. With inherent interest in graphic design and little competition for these previously overlooked works available at relatively inexpensive price points, Berman circled the globe, amassing expert knowledge to go with the most thorough collection of this genre. In 2018, MoMA acquired 324 avant-garde masterworks from Berman's collection, some of which will be presented in the upcoming exhibition *Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented*. Galerie St. Etienne's *Youth Style* can be considered a prequel to MoMA's exhibition which will focus on the revolutionary work made between the two world wars.

### **About Galerie St. Etienne**

Founded in 1939 by Otto Kallir, the Galerie St. Etienne is the oldest gallery in the United States specializing in Austrian and German Expressionism as well as in the work of self-taught artists. The gallery mounted the first American one-person shows of Erich Heckel (1955), Gustav Klimt (1959), Oskar Kokoschka (1940), Alfred Kubin (1941), Paula Modersohn-Becker (1958) and Egon Schiele (1941). The gallery is also known for its expertise on Käthe Kollwitz. St. Etienne was also instrumental in arranging the first American museum acquisitions of works by these artists, through sales and donations. Galerie St. Etienne developed a commitment to the work of self-taught American and European artists after presenting Grandma Moses's first one-person gallery show in 1940. Firmly committed to scholarship, the gallery's directors have authored catalogues raisonnés on Richard Gerstl, Grandma Moses and Egon Schiele. The current director, Jane Kallir, has written more than 20 books and is the leading authority on Egon Schiele.

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### **Galerie St. Etienne**

*Youth Style (Jugendstil)*

March 18 – May 22, 2020

24 W. 57<sup>th</sup> Street, #802, New York, NY 10019

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