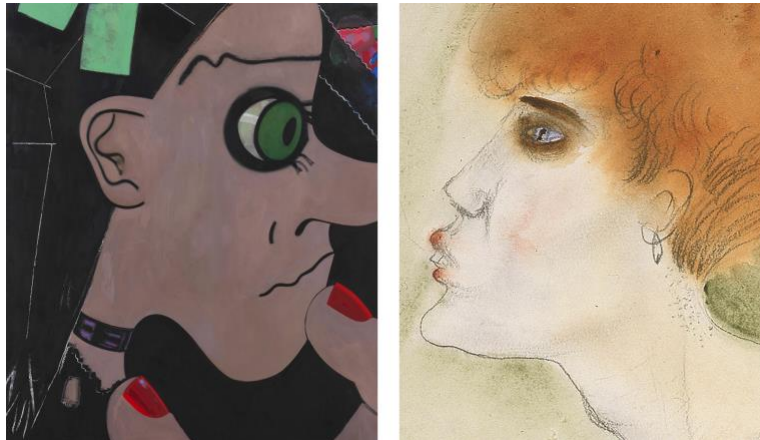


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THE GALERIE ST. ETIENNE PRESENTS:
TRANSITIONAL POSITIONS



From Left: Ellen Berkenblit (American, b. 1958): *The Room*, 2019, oil on linen, 76" x 60" (193 x 152.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York. Otto Dix (German, 1891-1969): *Red-Haired Nude with Red Stockings (Red-Haired Girl)* (detail), 1925, watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper. 20 1/4" x 12" (51.4 x 30.5 cm).

NEW YORK, NY (July 2, 2020) – **The Galerie St. Etienne** is pleased to announce *Transitional Positions*, an online group exhibition of the gallery's mainstay German and Austrian Expressionists, alongside contemporary female masters of figurative painting, curated by Eric Fischl. The exhibition will be on view July 7 – September 11, 2020.

From the gallery's vast inventory of German and Austrian Expressionists, Fischl chose works by Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Gustav Klimt, Käthe Kollwitz, Otto Mueller, Max Pechstein, Egon Schiele and others who were responding to the radical upheavals of the early twentieth century. Fischl then invited Ellen Berkenblit, Angela Dufresne, Nicole Eisenman, Tracey Emin, Sullivan Giles, Chantal Joffe, Gladys Nilsson, Jennifer Packer, Ellen Phelan, Jenny Saville and Joan Semmel to pick an Expressionist work, pair it with one of their own, and comment on their relationship to the piece.

Transitional Positions explores states of uncertainty: the uncomfortable yet bracing recognition that what once was accepted as a given no longer exists—and that the future is ours for the making. The exhibition can be broken down into four themes: *The Circus of Life*, *Portraits: Self & Other*, *Family: Mother & Child*, and *The Female Body*. As Fischl describes, "Like the Austrian and German Expressionists, the contemporary artists in *Transitional Positions* reinterpret historical motifs in ways that gives them revitalized expressive and creative force. These works assert the artist's experience of being in a variety of ways. Similarities—in the handling of line and form, of patterning and paint application, as well as in the exploration of psychological, sexual, decadent and subversive imagery—between the historical and the contemporary works in the exhibition allow us to measure the distance between then and now."

Highlights include Ellen Berkenblit's *The Room* (2019) which is paired with Otto Dix's *Red-Haired Nude with Red Stockings (Red-Haired Girl)*. Berkenblit's bold, graphic paintings are defined by an ever-evolving iconography of lipstick, a manicured hand, flowers, high-heels and women in profile. Her figures are transformed into abstractions through collections of lines that organize and drive the overall composition, interacting within the boundaries of the canvas. While these figures are often associated with classical notions of femininity, Berkenblit uses them to

reflect her physical experience of the world. Describing the way Dix's red-haired girl similarly occupies the entire painting, Berkenbilt states, "someone very still, her inner thoughts momentarily interrupted by small pit stops of clothing and everyday life, filling up the space of the picture frame and causing the figure to burst into fragments of paint--just color and line, and all those thoughts."

Jenny Saville, unable to limit herself to just one Expressionist work, chose Gustav Klimt's *Two Reclining Female Nudes* and Egon Schiele's *Seated Nude with Right Knee Raised, Looking to the Right*. Saville describes Klimt's work as grounded in contradictions: "That weight, plus the arm lying flat at the top left, anchor the drawing – but the touch of the pencil dances and hovers." Schiele, she notes, "has one of the strongest drawing lines in art history. He always knows what he's doing and creates solidity of form in a simple line that is riven with sexuality." Saville's work, like Schiele's, focuses unflinchingly on the human body, transcending the boundaries of both classical figuration and modern abstraction. The physicality of her layered paint surfaces evokes the feeling and appearance of human flesh, although each painted mark retains a supple, mobile life of its own. However, unlike Schiele, Saville is concerned less with subjective expression than with conveying conceptual or critical social messages.

About Eric Fischl

Eric Fischl is an internationally acclaimed American painter and sculptor. Born in New York in 1948, he graduated from the California Institute of Arts in Valencia in 1972. Fischl has exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe with recent solo exhibitions at the Albertina, Vienna in 2014; the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Malaga in 2010; the Kestnervesellschaft, Hannover in 2007-2008; the Stadtkirche Darmstadt in 2006 and the Delaware Center of Contemporary Art in 2006. His work has also been included in exhibitions in major institutions such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Musée Beaubourg, Paris; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and mostly recently in *Unfinished Business: Paintings from the '70s and '80s by Ross Bleckner, Eric Fischl, and David Salle* at the Parrish Museum, New York in 2016. Eric Fischl is a Fellow at both the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Science. He lives and works in Sag Harbor, NY with his wife, the painter April Gornik.

About The Galerie St. Etienne

Founded in 1939 by Otto Kallir, 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 discovering Grandma Moses, who had her first one-person show at the gallery 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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