

An impressionist painting of a woman in profile, looking to the left. She is wearing a light-colored hat with a large pink and purple flower. Her dress is white with a floral pattern. The background is a dense, textured green foliage. The painting style is characterized by visible brushstrokes and a vibrant color palette.

IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART

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EVENING SALE

CHRISTIE'S



# IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART

## EVENING SALE

### PROPERTIES FROM

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The Estate of Ilona Gerstel  
The Collection of  
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The Dr. Robert and Helen  
Mandelbaum Collection  
The Estate of Peter Matthiessen  
Cubisme: Property from the  
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# CHRISTIE'S

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PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF ILONA GERSTEL

**EGON SCHIELE (1890-1918)**  
*Stadt am blauen Fluss (Krumau)*

signed with initial and dated 'S.10.' (lower right)  
 gouache, watercolor, metallic paint and black Conté crayon on paper  
 17¾ x 12¾ in. (45 x 31.4 cm.)  
 Executed in 1910

**\$800,000-1,200,000**

**PROVENANCE:**

Fritz Grünbaum, Vienna.  
 Schenker & Co., Vienna (1938).  
 Gutekunst & Klipstein, Bern (circa 1956).  
 Galerie St. Etienne, New York (acquired  
 from the above, 1956).  
 Acquired from the above by the late owner, by 1965.

**EXHIBITED:**

Vienna, Galerie Würthle, *Egon Schiele*, December  
 1925-January 1926, no. 51.  
 Bern, Gutekunst & Klipstein, *Ausstellung Egon Schiele:  
 Bilder, Aquarelle, Zeichnungen, Graphik*, September-  
 October 1956, p. 18, no. 9 (illustrated).  
 New York, Galerie St. Etienne, *Egon Schiele:  
 Watercolors and Drawings*, January-February 1957,  
 p. 5, no. 1 (illustrated).  
 New York, Galerie St. Etienne, *Egon Schiele:  
 Watercolors and Drawings from American Collections*,  
 March-April 1965, p. 11, no. 13 (illustrated, pl. 5).  
 New York, Galerie St. Etienne, *Austria's Expressionism*,  
 April-May 1981, p. 38 (illustrated, fig. 38).  
 Vienna, Akademie der bildenden Künste; Milan,  
 Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera; Palermo, Villa Zito;  
 Tel Aviv Museum; Hamburger Kunsthalle; Salzburg,  
 Rupertinum; Graz, Schloss Plankenwirth; Innsbruck,  
 Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum; Bottrop, Josef  
 Albers Museum and Nürnberger Kunsthalle, *Egon  
 Schiele vom Schüler zum Meister*, January 1984-June  
 1986, p. 138, no. 21 (illustrated in color, pl. 21).  
 Rome, Pinacoteca Capitolina, Campidoglio,  
*Egon Schiele*, June-August 1984, p. 219, no. 50  
 (illustrated in color, pl. 50).  
 New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Drawings  
 in Austria and Germany*, May-October 1985.  
 New York, The Museum of Modern Art, circa 1985  
 (on extended loan).

**LITERATURE:**

W. Hofmann, "L'Espressionismo in Austria" in *L'Arte  
 Moderna*, 1967, vol. 3, no. 20, p. 80 (illustrated).  
 J. Kallir, *Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*, New York,  
 1990, p. 432, no. 742 (illustrated).  
 J. Kallir, *Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*, New York,  
 1998, p. 432, no. 742 (illustrated).

The present work is being offered for sale pursuant to a settlement agreement between the consignor and the Grünbaum Heirs. This resolves any dispute over ownership of the work and title will pass to the buyer.

During the year 1910, Schiele—then only 20 years old—created his famously radical figure compositions and self-portraits, unprecedented works which proclaim his breakthrough to a distinctively personal style, while revealing the essential qualities that would define his artistic maturity. He abruptly divested his work of Jugendstil decoration and ornament, a mainstay of his painting only the year before. "I went through Klimt until March," Schiele wrote in a letter of 1910. "Today I believe I am someone completely different" (quoted in Leopold Museum, Vienna, ed., *Egon Schiele Letters and Poems 1910-1912*, Munich, 2008, p. 57).

This miraculous metamorphosis bore fruit in Schiele's land- and townscape paintings as well. Jane Kallir lists ten such significant oils and gouaches painted in 1910 (Kallir, nos. 178-179 and 181-188). The present landscape is one of only three outdoor subjects executed that year in non-opaque watercolor; the other two are views of building facades (Kallir, nos. 740-741). Having flayed the human figure virtually down to the bone, Schiele likewise pared the landscape to its most essential elements. Schiele allowed his fluid colors loose rein, barely contained within a skeletal framework of quickly drawn but unerringly succinct lines. This composition evinces a startling vertiginous conception of distance and space, stacked vertically in the flat modernist manner.

Schiele decamped in May 1910 to the medieval Bohemian town of Krumau on the Moldau river—today called Cesk\* Krumlov on the Vltava in the Czech Republic. Krumau was well-known to Schiele; it was the birthplace of his mother Marie (*née* Soukup). After spending the winter in a new Vienna studio, he returned to the town in the early spring of 1911. Continuing to work from motifs in the vicinity, Schiele treated Krumau as a surrogate *mise-en-scène* in which he could evoke the "black shadows" of Vienna, while creating his ghostly vision of *die tote Stadt*—the "Dead City."

Schiele visualized his "colorful fields" in *Stadt am blauen Fluss* from a bluff overlooking the Moldau, gazing toward a bend in the river on the eastern outskirts of Krumau. The road running parallel to the water, the various building sites and natural features in this scene are viewable on Google Maps. The precipitously tilted aspect of the landscape, however—seen as if Schiele were piloting an early flying machine—is entirely the artist's invention, and lends the scene its unsettling spatial tensions. The pulsing vein of the Moldau appears to issue forth from a black void—the dark foliage on rocky hillsides that rise from the river bank—then cascades down the sheet; the landscape appears to fracture and break apart in some seismic upheaval. "My promenade leads me over the abyss," Schiele wrote (quoted in *ibid.*, frontispiece), as he plunged headlong into the expressionist void during 1910, his first year of painting dangerously, in one of the most stunning transformations of subjective emotion and style to have been achieved anywhere in all 20th century painting.

