

## The Family of Otto Kallir to Gift Over 100 Works of Austrian Expressionism to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)



(Image captions on page 5)

(Los Angeles, CA—October 8, 2025) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) today announced a gift of more than 130 works of Austrian Expressionism from the family of Otto Kallir, including the first paintings by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Richard Gerstl to enter the collection. Transferred to LACMA over several years, the donation broadly surveys Austrian Expressionism from its roots at the turn of the 20th century to the 1920s with paintings, more than 100 drawings, prints, and posters, and a selection of works by artist-designers who were affiliated with the Wiener Werkstätte, founded in 1903. In addition to the paintings by Klimt, Schiele, and Gerstl, the donation includes works by Oskar Kokoschka, Alfred Kubin, and Marie-Louise von Motesiczky and by the German artists Lovis Corinth and Käthe Kollwitz. The works on paper will join the holdings of the Robert Gore Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies at LACMA.

A venerable art dealer active in Vienna from the early 1920s, Otto Kallir (1894-1978) emigrated in 1938 after the National Socialist annexation of Austria. Arriving in New York in 1939, he established the Galerie St. Etienne, which continued to advance the work and legacy of Austrian Expressionists for 80 years. Many of the works in the gift were brought by Kallir from Vienna when he emigrated. Following his death in 1978, the gallery was run for 40 years by his granddaughter Jane Kallir, together with his business partner Hildegard Bachert. The Galerie St. Etienne closed in 2020, and Jane Kallir, a recognized scholar of Austrian modernism, has established The Kallir

Research Institute, which promotes critical research on Austrian and German Expressionism.

In addition to this gift to LACMA, the Kallir Family is donating to the Getty Research Institute a number of rare Viennese books, portfolios, and prints published by Kallir.

The Kallir Family gifts will enhance and complement LACMA's distinguished collection of German Expressionist paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. Beginning in 2026, The Kallir Research Institute will provide support for the study of Austrian Expressionism through the Rifkind Center's scholar-in-residence program. In 2030, LACMA will present the Kallir gifts in a comprehensive exhibition accompanied by a scholarly publication.

"We are deeply grateful to the Kallir Family for this landmark gift to LACMA, which greatly enhances our presentation of early 20th century art from Central Europe," said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "As we continue to build our collections, the Kallir Family's gift strengthens our commitment to fostering new scholarship on German-speaking artists and cultures, which played such an important role in Los Angeles in the 20th Century. We look forward to sharing these new works with our local and global audiences and continuing Otto Kallir's legacy."

Stephanie Barron, the museum's longtime senior curator and head of the Modern Art department, said, "Although LACMA has a distinguished collection of German Expressionist paintings and sculptures, we have long felt the lack of paintings by Austrian Expressionists. In a single stroke, this marvelous donation has transformed our holdings, bringing us our first paintings by Schiele, Klimt, Gerstl, and Marie-Louise von Motesiczky."

"Museum collaboration was key to Otto Kallir's promotion of Austrian Expressionism in the U.S., and I know he would be thrilled to see these works enter LACMA's collection," said Jane Kallir. "LACMA's longstanding commitment to Expressionism, as well as the centrality of the Austrian émigré community to California's postwar culture, were the primary reasons we chose LACMA as the permanent home for our family's collection. In addition, my sister Barbara Kallir has lived in Los Angeles for nearly forty years, so we both have a deep appreciation for the city and its cultural institutions. Together with our planned donations to the Getty Research Institute, we see Los Angeles as a prime nexus for Expressionist studies."

A selection of 24 works from this gift will be on view beginning November 23, 2025. Curated by Timothy O. Benson, Helgard Field Curator of the Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies, *Austrian Expressionism and Otto Kallir* will be presented in the Modern Art Galleries on BCAM, Level 3, through May 31, 2026.

“The Kallir Family gifts are the most significant addition to the Rifkind Study Center since the founding gift from Robert Gore Rifkind. They will be transformative in furthering the Rifkind Center’s mission to encourage cutting-edge scholarship, and will foster new, public-facing perspectives on early 20th-century culture in German-speaking countries,” said Benson.

Two public programs will take place in January 2026, including a panel discussion with Jane Kallir and leading art historians, as well as a documentary screening and conversation.

### **Background on the Kallir Family Gift**

Gustav Klimt (1862-1919) has long been considered a fountainhead of Austrian Expressionism by virtue of his radical approach to figuration and his lasting influence over other members of the Austrian avant-garde, among them, the younger **Egon Schiele** (1890-1918). The Kallir gift offers the opportunity to track Klimt’s groundbreaking engagement with the human form across the two final and defining decades of his oeuvre with eight drawings and a painting. The shimmering and intimate *Woman with the Fur Collar* (1897), puts the artist’s Symbolist impulse on ample display, and bears witness to the beginning of an artistic revolution in the Austro-Hungarian capital with Klimt’s co-founding of the Vienna Secession the same year. The core of the gift are the 27 works by **Egon Schiele**, two major landscape paintings of 1913 and 19 works on paper including 14 unflinching studies of the human figure, the most celebrated aspect of his oeuvre. The four Schiele self-portraits, created in a span of six years, evidence the pace of Schiele’s unprecedented stylistic development, culminating in the outstanding and deeply probing *Self-Portrait with Brown Background* (1912), which was executed at the height of his ill-fated romance with Wally Neuzil. The two Schiele landscape paintings are remarkable not only for their vigor, but also for marking turning points in Kallir’s life. *The Bridge* was shown in 1923 at the first posthumous Schiele exhibition organized by Kallir in his Neue Galerie in Vienna, and Kallir brought it and *Sawmill* with him when he fled Nazi-occupied Austria for New York.

Coming of age during the tumultuous last decade of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Kallir began professionally championing the legacy of Schiele and Klimt soon after their passing in 1918. In the case of the tragically short-lived **Richard Gerstl** (1883–1908), Kallir’s efforts around 1931 directly led to the recuperation of the little-known artist’s estate and its introduction to the Viennese public via Gerstl’s first posthumous exhibition the same year. Much sought-after but extremely rare are the five works by Gerstl in the gift, including the crystalline and piercing *Self-Portrait*, thought to have been executed a mere five weeks before the artist ended his life at the age of 25. The enigmatic work of Bohemian artist **Alfred Kubin** (1877-1959) has recently experienced a resurgence of interest; the gift of 10 works complements the museum’s two drawings and 46 prints by him, making possible a more comprehensive

presentation of his work. The first Austrian Expressionist to attain international renown, **Oskar Kokoschka** (1866-1980) led an itinerant life on a pan-European scale. One of his earliest travels to Italy is documented in the gift by two lively, veduta-like seascapes from 1913, both formerly owned by his lover Alma Mahler-Werfel, the widow of the illustrious composer and conductor Gustav Mahler and, in the 1940s, a prominent Los Angeles émigré. Two later Kokoschka drawings of women attest to the innovative potential of drawing as a modernist medium, prefiguring the gestural and compositional vitality of Willem de Kooning.

Similar to Kokoschka, Kallir did not limit himself to the Austrian art scene and quickly became a proponent of international, especially German, art. During his lifetime, Kallir devoted 15 solo exhibitions to **Käthe Kollwitz** (1867-1945), and the gift brings two important preparatory charcoal drawings, which provide clues about the creative process behind two corresponding, iconic prints already in the Rifkind Center's collection. The gift also creates an opportunity to narrate the full extent of the prominent Berlin Secessionist **Lovis Corinth's** (1858-1925) activities as a prolific draughtsman and printmaker via a landscape painting, 42 works on paper, and two sketchbooks. The depth of Austrian-German interactions in the artistic sphere is further exemplified by two early portraits by the Viennese-born **Marie-Louise Motesiczky** (1906-1996), who was a student of Max Beckmann in Frankfurt in the 1920s.

This addition to LACMA's collection and programming adds a new chapter to the storied cultural dialogue between Austria and Southern California, which has indelibly shaped the cultural landscape of Los Angeles, especially through the work of émigré artists, musicians, actors, architects, writers, and filmmakers in the post-World War II decades, among them Fritz Lang, Lotte Lenya, Peter Lorre, Richard Neutra, Otto Preminger, Arnold Schoenberg, Rudolf Schindler, Joseph von Sternberg, Franz Werfel, and Billy Wilder.

## **Related Programs**

### **Panel Discussion**

January 15, 2026

Ted Mann Theater at the Academy Museum, time to be announced

Stephanie Barron, (LACMA, Senior Curator and Head of Modern Art) to introduce a program featuring Jane Kallir (Otto Kallir's granddaughter, scholar, and founder of the Kallir Research Institute), Dr. Nathan J. Timpano (University of Miami, Chair of Art & Art History and Associate Professor of Art History), and Dr. Timothy O. Benson (LACMA, Helgard Field Curator of the Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies). Discussion to be moderated by Dr. Sabine Eckmann (Kemper Art Museum, William T. Kemper Director and Chief Curator)

## Screening and Conversation

January 18, 2026

*Transatlantic Tastemaker: Otto Kallir and Austrian Modernism*, a documentary following Kallir's trajectory from Vienna to New York, featuring interviews with gallerists and museum colleagues and directed for ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk—the Austrian public television) by Stefanie Simpkins, will be screened, followed by a conversation with Jane Kallir, granddaughter of Otto Kallir and other experts. This event is co-sponsored by the Austrian Consulate, Los Angeles

For more information and event updates, visit [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

**About LACMA:** Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of more than 150,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

**Location:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

**Image captions (left to right):** Gustav Klimt, *Woman with Fur Collar*, 1897, gift of Kallir Family; Egon Schiele, *Sawmill*, 1913, Kallir Family Collection, promised gift to Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Egon Schiele, *Self-Portrait with Brown Background*, 1912, gift of Kallir Family; all photos courtesy Kallir Research Institute, New York

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