



Northwestern
**COMPARATIVE
MODERNISMS
WORKSHOP**

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**EGON
SCHIELE IN
THE CLINIC:**

**MEDICINE
MOTHERHOOD
& VIENNESE
MODERNISM**

ALYS GEORGE
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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KAPLAN HUMANITIES INSTITUTE**

“Pathological” was a damning term frequently applied to the visual art of Viennese modernism. Yet while the nudes of Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka, and others diverged sharply from the classical pictorial tradition, they emerged alongside a contemporaneous trend: the increasing presence of medical imagery in the city’s visual vernacular. In the decades after 1900, the bodies of working-class Viennese—women and children, in particular—came to occupy a central place in films, lectures, exhibitions, and popular literature. The medicalized gaze of “pathological” portraiture, this lecture argues, was fostered by a complex Viennese social network of physicians, artists, writers, and politicians—all of whom staked their claims on the mother’s body to vastly different ends.