

**IN FRONT OF THE  
CAMERA AT**

**ATELIER**

*S'Ora*

## ELSIE ALTMANN-LOOS (1899-1984)

Altman-Loos was an Austrian dancer and actor. Her début dance performance was in 1919. Later that same year, she marries modernist architect Adolf Loos, who is thirty years her senior. He opposed the Vienna Secession and advocated a simple architecture free from decoration and ornamentation.

Elsie Altmann-Loos soon began to earn more income than her husband and was forced to tour frequently to support his flamboyant life style. In 1928, her husband was convicted of child abuse. After he demanded that his wife - to please him more - extend her legs through an operation in which the legs would be broken and elongated, they divorced.

As a Jew, she was forced into exile during World War II. She settled in Argentina, remarried and took the name Elsie Altmann-Loos de Gonzales Varona. She worked as a translator, and in 1984 her uncensored memoirs were published: *My life with Adolf Loos*. She never returned to Europe, and died in Buenos Aires.

The portrait of Elsie Altmann-Loos was taken by d'Ora in 1922.



Elsie Altmann-Loos, 1922. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora)  
© Photostudio Setzer-Tschiedel.

## JOSÉPHINE BAKER (1906–1975)

Freda Josephine McDonald aka Joséphine Baker was an American-born French dancer, singer and music hall entertainer. Born into poverty in Missouri, she left home as a teenager. She would spend most of her life in France. In 1925, she had her big break with the show *La Revue Nègre*, which opened at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, run by the Swede Rolf de Maré. The following year, she performed in the iconic banana skirt.

Baker also had an espionage career. She was recruited by Jaques Abtey, head of French counterintelligence in Paris. When the German forces occupied Paris during World War II, Baker had Abtey pose as her manager, allowing him to leave the city. During her tours in France and Spain, she socialised with Germans at embassy parties and was able to gather information about troop movements that she transmitted to the French Resistance using invisible ink on her sheet music. Baker's commitment to human rights and her work with the French Resistance led to her being honoured, as the first Black woman, with a place in the Panthéon in Paris in the autumn of 2021.

Baker was unable to have children of her own, but over the years, she adopted twelve children from various countries, referring to them as her *Rainbow Tribe*. After Baker ran into financial difficulties in the 1960s, Princess Grace offered her a villa in Monaco. She moved there with her children and used it as a base between her many tours. She died just days after the première of her final show: *Joséphine*.



Joséphine Baker, 1928. Dora Kallmus  
(Atelier d'Ora)  
© Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe.

## ANITA BERBER (1899–1928)

Berber was a scandal-ridden and multi-talented German dancer, actor and writer. In the years after the end of World War I, Germany churned with creativity and a pent-up need for culture as well as liberation. Liberal censorship laws created opportunities in the theatre and vaudeville, which suited Berber perfectly and at 20 years old she performed nude in cabarets.

Berber also starred in a number of films, including in Richard Oswald's silent film *Different From the Others* from 1919. This is considered to be the first film to advocate for gay rights. It challenged Germany's ban on homosexuality and was later banned by the Nazis.

Together with Sebastian Droste, she composed the acclaimed dance piece *Die Tänze des Lasters, des Grauens und der Ekstase* (Dances of Vice, Horror and Ecstasy) saturated with sadomasochism, sex and nudity. They became international celebrities and even published a printed edition with the same title, which included the photo taken in Madame d'Ora's studio.

One of Berber's love affairs was with Hollywood star Marlene Dietrich, and Berber's bisexuality and defiance of traditional gender norms was widely discussed in the gossip columns. There were reports of how Berber, wearing only a sable wrap, a brooch packed with cocaine and a pet monkey on her shoulder, haunted Berlin's nightclubs and casinos. She died aged 29 years following a collapse on stage in Beirut. Years of intense abuse of cocaine, chloroform, ether and alcohol took its toll.



Anita Berber, 1922. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora) © Photoinstitut Bonartes.

## LIZICA CODREANU (1901–1993)

The dancer and choreographer Lizica Codreanu was born in Bucharest, Romania. In the summer of 1919, she travelled to Paris with her sister, sculptor Irina Codreanu. Irina became an apprentice in the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi's studio, and through him, the sisters come in contact with Parisian cultural avant-garde. In the photograph by Madame d'Ora from 1926, Lizica Codreanu is dressed in a costume by the artist Sonia Delaunay, and she danced to Erik Satie's *Gymnopédies* in a costume that Brancusi designed specifically for her. Brancusi documented her dance in his studio in a series of photographs and in 2014 the National Center for Dance in Bucharest put on a performance recreating her dance.

Toward the end of 1926, she married the journalist Jean Fontenoy and together they travelled to China. They had a son together but after a few years she left her husband. Her career as a dancer was brief and from 1938 she taught yoga in Paris. Lizica died in the northern French town of Louveciennes in 1993.



Lizica Codreanu, 1927. Dora Kallmus  
(Atelier d'Ora) © Photoinstitut Bonartes.

## COLETTE (1873-1954)

Colette was born in a small town in Burgundy, France. At the age of 20, she married the 15 year older author and critic Henri Gauthier-Villars, 15 years her senior. Her aptitude for writing soon became apparent and he encouraged her to write four short stories, which he published under his own name. Colette left him after a few years and since her former husband kept the royalties to the short stories, she she managed to to make a living, among other things, by performing on cabarets in Paris.



Colette, 1954. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora)  
© Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe.

She had a relationship with the Marquise de Balbeuf (Missy).

In 1907, they performed together at Moulin Rouge in the pantomime *The Dream of Egypt*. Although queer people were relatively accepted in relatively open-minded Paris, their intimate kiss on stage caused a riot at Moulin Rouge.

During her life she wrote salacious novels, short stories, essays, memoirs, and as a journalist she reported on everything from domestic violence, anorexia and orgasms to the front lines of the First World War. Colette also worked on silent films, opened a chain of beauty salons, and wrote a libretto for an opera by Ravel.

The portrait taken by d'Ora was taken in Colette's final days. At that time, she was married to her third husband, Maurice Goudeket. Together they had survived World War II. Her husband was Jewish and was captured by the Gestapo in 1941, but Colette managed to get him released.

## SEBASTIAN DROSTE (1892-1927)

Droste (b. Willÿ Knobloch) was a German poet, actor and dancer. He served in World War I and moved to Berlin after the war, where he supported himself as a nude dancer and an expressionist poet. At this time, Berlin vibrated with neon lights and nightlife. People challenged moral perceptions and customs, and pushed boundaries; exotic jazz was played at nightclubs and on the cabaret stages, the performers were both nude and rude. In this setting, there was also room for homosexuals, with a multitude of cafés, nightclubs and bars catering to gay patrons.

In 1922, he met the dancer Anita Berber at a gay bar. Together, they composed the acclaimed dance piece *Die Tänze des Lasters, des Grauens und der Ekstase* (Dances of Vice, Horror and Ecstasy) saturated with sadomasochism, sex and nudity. The performance took Vienna, and subsequently, Europe, by storm. Together they published a printed edition with the same title, which included the photo taken in Madame d'Ora's studio. The edition also included poetry, texts and drawings of stage clothes.

The pair was dissolved as Droste moved to New York with his lover. He died from tuberculosis in 1927.



Anita Berber & Sebastian Droste,  
1922. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora)  
© Photoinstitut Bonartes.

## EMILIE FLÖGE (1874–1952)

Flöge is believed to be the woman in Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss* from 1907-1909. However, she was more than Klimt's muse. Together with her two sisters, Pauline and Helene, Flöge started the fashion house Schwestern Flöge in 1904. The interior of their fashion house was designed by Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser from Wiener Werkstätte and for a time, the sisters had as many as 80 seamstresses working in their studios. Fashionable ladies of the Viennese cultural elite could commission portraits by Klimt, garments by the Schwestern Flöge and portrait photographs by Madame d'Ora.

As a creative leader and stylist, Flöge designed "reform dresses", a loosely cut and comfortable garment with wide sleeves that promoted comfort and condemned constricting lacing and corsets. These reform dresses would contribute to women's liberation. They were decorated with geometric shapes inspired by Eastern Europe and Japan. The patterns reappear in her partner Gustav Klimt's paintings.



Emilie Flöge, 1909. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora) © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.



## FOUJITA (1886–1968)

Léonard Fujita Tsuguharu was an artist born in Tokyo and studied at the Tokyo Fine Arts School as a young man. In 1913, he moved to Paris and quickly became part of a circle of artists, including, Amedeo Modigliani, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and also d'Ora. Known to his many friends as *Fou Fou*, he was famous for his lavish parties. In Paris, he took dance lessons from Isadora Duncan, whom Carl Milles had also seen and admired during his time in the city.

Foujita was a married man when he arrived in Paris, but he divorced soon after. He remarried four more times and sometimes had open relationships with his wives, in which both parties had both male and female lovers.

Foujita sported a bowl haircut, round tortoiseshell glasses and large gold earrings; an iconic look he maintained throughout his life, from the time his hair was jet black until it turned ash grey.

In his art, Foujita combined Japanese traditional ink techniques with Western style painting. His fame came from his self-portraiture and his depiction of cats and women with flawless milky-white skin. The milky mother-of-pearl luminescent glaze He achieved the by mixing chalk and oil with magnesium silicate.

In the late 1930s, Foujita move back to Japan, where he became an official artist for the Imperial Japanese Army.



Tsuguharu Foujita, 1926. Dora Kallmus  
(Atelier d'Ora) © Photoinstitut Bonartes.

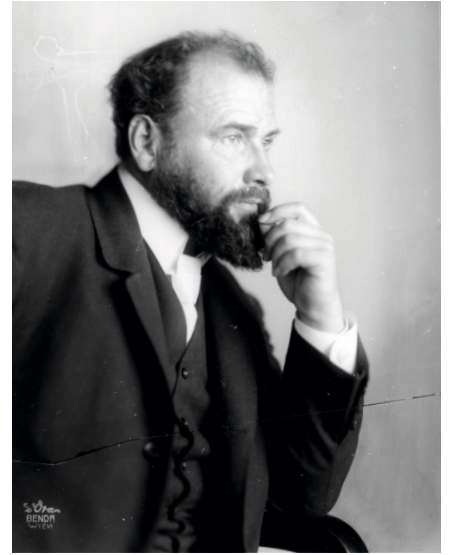
## GUSTAV KLIMT (1862–1918)

The artist Gustav Klimt was born the second of seven children. Together with his brother Ernst, he attended an art school and later, the pair opened a studio. One of their first commissions was the ceiling paintings in Vienna's reopened Burgtheater, which brought acclaim from Emperor Franz Joseph I.

Klimt's art has been central for the evolution of modern art, abstract painting and cubism. He was one of the founding members of the Vienna Secession in 1897. His choice of subject often came from the realm of mythology, often with an erotic note. He used eroticism to protest the hypocritical morality of the late 1800s. His inspiration also came from other parts of the world. He collected ethnographic objects and his studio, designed by Josef Hoffmann of the Wiener Werkstätte, included furniture from China, silk fabrics from India and wooden sculptures from Africa.

His father was a gold engraver, and Klimt's *The Kiss* from 1907–1909 in which he used gold leaf, is probably his most popular work. He was also inspired by the famous gold mosaics in Ravenna, which he visited in 1903. His world-famous painting depicts his life partner, Emilie Flöge, who is also presented in this exhibition.

The portrait photo of Gustav Klimt was among those exhibited at Madame d'Ora's first exhibition at Kunstsalon Heller in the spring of 1909.



Gustav Klimt, 1908. Dora Kallmus  
(Atelier d'Ora)  
© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

## KARL KRAUS (1874–1936)

Kraus was an Austrian writer, journalist and satirist. In 1899, he founded the social criticism and satirical magazine *Die Fackel* (The Torch), in which he published short critical texts on topics he had read in the daily press.

Kraus despised the aristocracy, the materialism of the bourgeoisie, commercialism and society's growing ignorance, which he felt was especially evident in the newspapers. He commented with relish on women's liberation, the struggle for equality, and women in general, often in belittling terms. With words such as:

“Cosmetics is the science of a woman's cosmos.”

“A woman is more than just her exterior. The lingerie is also important.”

He had an obsession with the German language and it is said that there is not a single proofreading error in the over 900 published issues of *Die Fackel*. Cultural personalities who contributed content to his magazine include artist Oskar Kokoschka, architect Adolf Loos and authors Oscar Wilde and August Strindberg.

Kraus' play *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (Last days of Mankind), which is a condemnation of World War I, was burned in public book burnings in Nazi Germany in 1933.



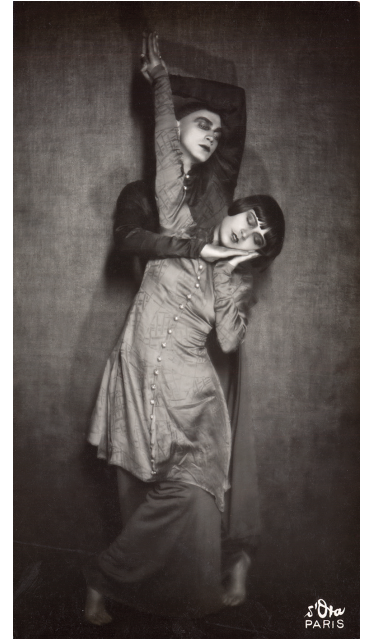
Karl Kraus, 1908. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora)  
© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

# HARALD KREUTZBERG (1902-1968)

Kreutzberg was a German dancer and choreographer. He is regarded as a pioneer of modern German dance, whose choreography was filled with humour, pantomime and masks. He seldom strayed from the demonic and macabre in his art. He also incorporated feminine elements into his choreography, which inspired male dancers to break stereotypes in dance.

Together with Yvonne Georgi, he toured in the United States, Europe and Canada. He was one of the few German dancers dancers who, during World War II, could continue to dance because he had a good relationship with the Nazi propaganda ministry.

In 1955, he opened his own school in Bern, Switzerland, where he taught until 1959.



Harald Kreutzberg & Yvonne Georgi,  
c. 1927. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora)  
© Photoinstitut Bonartes.

## TAMARA DE LEMPICKA (1898–1980)

Lempicka was a Polish modernist artist whose portraits in distinctive Art Deco style are renowned. Her oil paintings depicting her female lover Ira Perrot have in recent years fetched record prices at international auction houses.

In 1913, she met her future husband, Tadeusz Łempicki, in Saint Petersburg. He was imprisoned during the Russian Revolution in 1917, but with the help of the Swedish consul he was released and the couple then fled to Paris. That is where her career began. She was a student of Maurice Denis and André Lhote and soon made a name for herself as an artist, including as a portrait painter. During the interwar period, her clients consisted of writers, artists, researchers and East European nobility in exile. The artist and author Jean Cocteau is said to have remarked that she loved art and high society to the same extent.

Lempicka's paintings were often published in fashion magazines in which Madame d'Ora's photographs were also printed, such as *Harper's Bazaar* and the German *Die Dame*.

In the mid-1930s, Lempicka married Raoul Kuffner, a wealthy Hungarian baron. Both he and Tamara had a Jewish background, and when the political climate changed in Europe, they decided in 1939 to settle in the United States. Lempicka died in Mexico in 1980. Before she died, she requested that her daughter scatter her ashes over the Popocatepetl volcano.



Tamara de Lempicka, 1933. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora) © Photoinstitut Bonartes.

## ALMA MAHLER (1878–1964)

Alma Mahler (b. Schindler) was born into a family in which there was room for creativity, musicality and socialising. Her father was a landscape painter and her mother was a singer. Members of the Vienna Secession gathered in their home: architects such as Joseph Maria Olbrich, Josef Hoffmann and the artists Koloman Moser and Alfred Roller. Her first romantic interest was Gustav Klimt, and her partners included artist Oskar Kokoschka and composers Alban Berg and Gustav Mahler.

Mahler was known as the “it” girl of Vienna. Charismatic and beautiful. She was 22 years old at the time of her marriage to Mahler, almost 20 years younger than her husband. Her composing had no real place in their marriage. In connection with their engagement, her husband insisted that she give up composing, and regrettably, only around fourteen lieder songs by Alma Mahler have survived. The songs are personal and intimate. One of them is a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke set to music.

Today, Gustav Mahler is considered one of the greatest composers of his time. Because he was Jewish, his music was banned during World War II, but after 1945 his fame grew. However, scholarship related to him has been fraught with a problem dubbed the *Alma Problem*, since Alma Mahler changed, distorted and destroyed letters and other written communications between the couple. She was anxious that she herself, and the couple’s messy marriage, should appear in the way she wanted.

Alma’s second marriage was to the Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius. The couple had a daughter together, Manon, who died from complications of polio aged 18 years. The composer Alban Berg’s acclaimed Violin Concerto was dedicated to Manon, *To the Memory of an Angel*.



Alma Mahler, 1909. Dora Kallmus  
(Atelier d’Ora)  
© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

# ANNA PAVLOVA (1881–1931)

Pavlova was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Despite the family's difficult financial circumstances, she was determined to become a prima ballerina, which she also succeeded in doing. With support from her family, hard work and great willpower, she became the greatest ballerina of her time.

Pavlova is most renowned for her interpretation of The Dying Swan in Pyotr Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake*. She had swans of her own in her garden in London in order to study them up close. In 1911, she established her own company, which meant she could influence and choreograph the character she performed on stage.

Pavlova was world famous and toured around the world constantly until her death in 1931. She performed in Europe, the United States, South America and Australia. She visited Sweden on three occasions.

Carl Milles, who was fascinated by dance and how dancers' movements could be captured in bronze, interpreted her in a sculpture a year after her death. A proposal was submitted to erect a memorial in her honour in Regent's Park in London, in the form of a fountain sculpture by Milles. Pavlova's husband, Victor Dandré, tried to raise the funds to build the memorial; the matter was debated in the British Parliament, but the project was never carried out.



Anna Pavlova, 1913. Dora Kallmus  
(Atelier d'Ora)  
© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

## ANNA SACHER (1859–1930)

Anna Sacher (b. Fuchs) was a formidable hotel proprietor who made the exclusive Hotel Sacher in Vienna one of the most famous hotels in Europe.

In 1832, Prince Klemens Wenzel von Metternich (brother of Pauline von Metternich, whose photo by d’Ora is shown in the exhibition), asked the young apprentice Franz Sacher to prepare a novel dessert for his guests. The chef was ill and the responsibility for the cake fell on the young 16 year-old. The result was the Sachertorte, which remains popular worldwide to this day, not least at the hotel in Vienna. Anna Sacher married Franz Sacher’s son, hotelier and restaurateur Eduard Sacher. After her husband’s death in 1892, she became the managing director of the hotel, and in the following years she made Hotel Sacher world renowned.

In the photograph taken by Madame d’Ora, Sacher is seen together with two of her French bulldogs which she bred in her own kennel. Sacher died in her hotel in 1930 and thousands of Viennese honoured her with a funeral cortège.



Anna Sacher, 1907. Dora Kallmus  
(Atelier d’Ora)

© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.



## ANNA MAY WONG (1905–1961)

Wong Liu-Tsong was born in Los Angeles. She became interested in acting and movies at an early age and adopted the name Anna May Wong. At a time when Chinese characters in Hollywood were played by white actors in yellowface, Wong was the first woman to buck that trend and became the first major Chinese American Hollywood movie star, widely known for her acting and her sense for fashion. Despite her popularity, however, she cast stereotypical roles in Hollywood and was forbidden to film intimate scenes with an actor of another race. American-Chinese roles tended to be negatively typecast, as either tragic or malicious characters. This discrimination led her to her leave the United States for Europe for a few years.



Anna May Wong, c. 1929. Dora Kallmus (Atelier d'Ora) © Photoinstitut Bonartes.

During her career, she performed in as many as 60 films, including the *Shanghai Express* (1932) which also starred Marlene Dietrich. Wong also featured in documentaries about China and in several television series during the 1950s and 1960s.

Anna May Wong died of a massive heart attack in Santa Monica in 1961. For years before her passing, she suffered from liver disease.