

FANTASTIC! Alfred Kubin and the Blue Rider
October 9, 2018 – February 17, 2019

The Austrian graphic artist Alfred Kubin (1877–1959) is often counted among the founding members of the Blue Rider, but little is known about his specific relationships with the other artists in the circle. This groundbreaking exhibition presents a rich selection of works, documents, and photographs to trace the complex history of personal entanglements and mutual creative inspiration. Few people are now aware that Kubin's first exhibition in Munich in 1904, which showcased his famously scandalous 'early work' with its drastic visions fueled by primal urges and obsessive thoughts, opening a door to the "darkroom of the modern soul," was presented by Wassily Kandinsky's artists' association Phalanx.

Five years later—Kubin had gone through a period of cathartic personal upheaval, written his novel *The Other Side*, and moved from Munich to Zwickledt in western Austria—he was invited to join the Neue Künstlervereinigung München (N.K.V.M.) established by Kandinsky, Münter, Jawlensky, Werefkin, and others. When the Blue Rider seceded in 1911, Gabriele Münter again wrote to Kubin, asking him to contribute to the new venture. Now it was the psychological, fantastic, and dreamlike dimensions of Kubin's innovative and calligraphically fluent pen-and-ink drawings that fascinated his artist friends. When the second Blue Rider exhibition was put together, he contributed many-figured scenes that painted a disquietingly irrational panorama of life, with frequent glimpses of a mysterious twilight realm. This dedication to a spiritual dimension united Kubin with Kandinsky, Franz Marc, and Paul Klee, though each artist charted his own approach to it.

Curated by Annegret Hoberg