

Message of oskar kokoschka's piece

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Oskar Kokoschka's piece, titled *Two Nudes (Lovers)* (1913) depicts just as the title suggests - two nude lovers as the subject. Painted in Vienna, this painting was said to have been a symbolic reference to affair in which Kokoschka took part in. With analogous hues of blue, pink, tan, purple, and green, the artist renders a self-portrait and a woman, and reflects the complex relationship between the two. In analyzing Kokoschka's technique, it may be obvious that he was heavily influenced by Vincent Van Gogh - using expressionistic style and prominent brushstrokes to create an abstract, yet elegant work of art.

There are various viewpoints both within and surrounding the triangular composition of the two individuals that could catch the viewer's eye with a perfunctory glance... may it be the outermost leg of the woman as she steps forward, or the crossing stare of the figures as they perform both an uncompromising embrace and movement, or even the outlying pastel-colored landscape that could be conceived as some sort of hideaway. By strong and bold brushstrokes around the two figures, unstable feelings are expressed, and depth throughout the bodies is developed. With the figures placed vertically, the woman's form, from her foot to her head, is painted almost in a straight line, as well as in a center line. This then clarifies that the focal point is not the man, but rather her, who is looking toward a completely different direction from him. In this dance-like encounter, their nude bodies are conjured up by means of deep earth tones and delicate hues of pink.

The combination of soft hues against dark tones may evince the he man stands firmly against the ground with his back leg as if to hold much of the

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woman's weight. This assumption is then implausible, as she places a gentle hand upon his cheek, and their melancholy faces nearly touch, but not quite. Kokoschka's use of blue was mixed heavily within the landscape, applied randomly on the grass, and sparingly onto the bodies. Contour lines of black and deep purple are applied to outline the figures and create depth, resulting in a somewhat 3 dimensional form. On the male, these lines are visible all throughout the entire silhouette - lining his legs, his torso, and his facial features. On the woman, these lines are just the same, outlining her wide hips and casting a shadow to the left of her left foot. The deep purples well-elucidate every spot that would naturally appear as dark shadow-like tones, lining his spine and his legs, and her left shoulder and knee. Most essential, though, is the darkness of the eyes of both figures, and identifying the fact that the two are only partially associated with each other - merely through touch, and not through visual connection.

To convey motion, Kokoschka traces their limbs with the distinct, black arcing lines that define the curvature of each muscle, giving the viewer a sense of the energy of movement in their bodies. Additionally, the strong diagonal lines in the legs create a sense of walking, or a swift movement. These long brushstrokes convey stability and fluidity, whereas the short brushstrokes of pastels applied among the bodies gives a sense of natural lighting, and gives the painting an all-around sorrowful tone. With these Van Gogh-inspired brushstrokes, it would be quite visible to someone physically standing in front of this painting to see the impasto used. The flower-like objects placed throughout the landscape, as well as the mixed earth tones on the ground, were applied with thick and abrupt strokes to make the paint

stand out from the surface. The bodies, on the other hand, were given the thick black and purple strokes to oppose the pastel pinks and tans, delineating Kokoschka's gestural force to add more expression.

The size of the figures in relation to the size of the canvas helps give the painting an intensified emotional mood. The combination of abstraction (the color selection and setting) and the use of expressionism (in the body language and facial expressions) constitute the passionate, yet melodramatic feel of the work as it is being viewed. The man, walking away, stops only to make physical contact with the woman. In doing so, he looks behind him with a disconsolate stare, just briefly looking beyond the viewer as he walks away. The woman, who holds a doleful look as well, applies a careful hand onto his cheek as she smoothly glides forward in her walk away from the audience.

While the sorrowful mood of the picture is conveyed most obviously through the position and attitude of the figures, still the entire painting functions in evoking this response . . . Together but apart, withdrawn from but related to their environment, the woman and man unify for only a moment in a loose embrace, and then continue on their way to a life where the relationship ceases to exist. Personally, I love this work and the emotions Kokoschka attempts to appeal. The facial expressions are the most indispensable piece to the painting, and the most essential part to understanding the story conveyed above.