

Free essay about art criticism over the work of art 'the kiss' by gustav klimt

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The painting 'The Kiss' (original Der Kuss) is Klimt's most famous work of art among his golden pieces of work. The painting also happens to be Austria's most famous piece: In Austria it is a treasure - one without a price (Brijbassi 1). Its current location is the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere museum and is specifically housed in the Belvedere palace, in Vienna, Austria. The Belvedere owns 22 of Klimt's pieces and in all of them, 'The Kiss' has received the most of everything, from attention to criticism to praise and respect accorded to the painter. Klimt's creation of the painting began in 1907 and was completed in 1908. His use of gold in his paintings is said to have been inspired when he first had a trip to Italy in 1903 and visited the Church of San Vitale. The Byzantine mosaics gave him a new motive and perspective that made him start using Gold and Silver in his paintings. This work attempts to criticize and Klimt's painting 'The Kiss' in three different categories: formal, contextual and expressive.

In the formal theories, the painting will be observed looking for the visual elements and the principles of design. As stated earlier, Klimt used gold and silver in his paintings, therefore consequently, the painting is on a canvas where oil and gold have been used. The painting in the museum, the original copy, is squarely large, precisely 180 cm x 180 cm. The use of gold is because people love gold and draws attention to the painting. Gold is also a religious icon as he had seen in the church, in Italy. The expensive nature of gold indicates the prestige the painting commands and the value it shouts. The piece of art feels as if Klimt did not do a sketch but instead, the painting just unfolded organically as he progressed in its creation. In addition, the use of gold highlights the two figures compared to the rest of the painting. The

background in bronze makes all the attention to be directed on the eye-captivating, gold highlighted figures. The bronze background makes the painting to seem as if the figures are being dissipated so deep into the cosmos indicating how lost they are in the eternity of the kiss.

The shapes in the figures and color of in the figures are not just random. The rectangles and the straight back of the man are masculine characteristics including the color of his decorative garment. The rectangles are black and white, colors that are mostly attributed to men. The size of the body of the male figure shows some male superiority, but it is also a feeling of protection upon the female figure. Now on contrast, the female side shows her covered in a decorative garment with colors ranging from green to red to blue: clearly a feminine taste. In addition, her garment is decorated with ovals and circles as well as the compliment of her curvy body, another indication of the female character and characteristics.

The figures depict a man and a woman tightly embraced together set around, suggestively, a lake, due to the swath of blue flowers and climbing reeds around the feet of a woman. It can also be portrayed that the figures are situated at the edge of a flowered escarpment since the feet of the female figure is seen hanging from the perceived edge. The man seems to be bending down to press his lips on the cheek, which seems to be welcoming, of the woman. The smile of a woman is evident from how tight her lips seem to be, indicating some rapture. Her face is full frontal and horizontal just showing how much she is in depth of the feeling. The ground surface, upon which the woman is kneeling shows the connection to mother nature that she has and the man with a black and white color displays

knowledge and energy towards the woman, all indicating the balance in nature.

Considering the contextual theories, the marvelous piece of art will be analyzed from the culture of the artist (Klimt) to the effect of that culture towards the work (Der Kuss). First of all, the painter has a reputation connecting him to women. He has been known to have several affairs with women as well as with his female patrons from the 'haute bourgeoisie.' He, however, had a known girlfriend or, purposely, lover dubbed Emilie Floege. From that background, it can be well connected 'The Kiss' drew its theme from the character of the artist and his culture, as well. More specifically Emilie was said to have been the greatest contributor to the female figure in the painting and that the male figure was the artist himself.

At the time that Klimt was creating his art, Vienna had been undergoing a transformation into modernization for the previous thirty years to become a modern city in Austria. It is unlikely that Klimt's painting did not draw part of its inspiration from the modernization that was taking place at that time. The painting, however, is said to have been the last in the gold works of Klimt and that it set the basis for helping notable artists attain great recognition. At the same time, a piece of artwork is drawn away from the everyday life and recent modernization at the time. There is almost no indication of the current state of the city at the time in the painting.

Klimt's culture that was created by his former paintings is seen to be the direct opposite in 'The Kiss.' His former paintings displayed nudity, sexuality and deep sensations. The figures were less covered in clothing unlike 'The Kiss' where only the faces of the figures, and maybe the legs of the woman

were exposed. The sensuality is still displayed in the painting and sexuality not to a great level as the rest of the other paintings. His other paintings are interpreted that figures are fighting off the evil and finally in another painting, there is an embrace of a male and female figure showing the fulfillment after fighting off the evil. *Der Kuss* is a compliment of the story that the other photos were narrating and the embrace of the male and female figures is also a finish to the story. Klimt was the founder of Vienna Secession that expanded modern art movement that helped notable artists attain great recognition. That also inspired the painting that he last used Gold.

While it might be thought that the woman in the painting is forcefully held and that she is trying to push herself or the man away, it is the wrong interpretation. The whole of their bodies are covered except the faces and that changes the entire painting. The female figure's beautiful face is full frontal but horizontal, showing her perceptivity and receiving nature to the kiss with some deep interior feeling. The man, on the other hand, is seen bending down to kiss a woman's cheek, whose eyes are closed. The man's neck reaches out and around, shows his physical power through the strength of the neck. All that displays the intensity of his desire towards the woman. Keen observation reveals that the crowns on the heads of the two figures. The man is crowned in a wreath of leaves and the female figure has a crown that contains stars as if they were heavenly bodies. The picture is designed to obstruct the modernization of Vienna. It is drawn away from the normality of life, from the universal experience, from the trauma and difficulties and the anxiety of everyday life. By looking at the art, there is a sense of

peacefulness and calm that couples feel when they get some time to be alone and share some wonderful moments.

Summarily, 'The Kiss' is a fine piece of art that is celebrated all over by artists and all inhabitants of Austria. Having a personal experience to examine the painting is such an honor. From all the analysis, the painting is captivating to whoever is keen to understand and appreciate whatever it has to offer.