

# Paul klee: art analysis



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**PAUL KLEE**

Paul Klee, a German national Swiss painter, was born on 18th December 1879 in a place called Münchenbuchsee bei Bern in Switzerland. He grew up in a music family and was himself a violinist. After many years, he chooses to study art, not music, and he attended the Munich Academy in 1900. He joined Der Blaue Reiter, an expressionist group that contributed much to the development of art abstract. After World War 1 he taught at the Bauhaus School. In 1931 he began teaching at Dusseldorf Academy.

He was a natural draftsman who experimented and researched most of the time in obtaining new color combinations and most of them in natural and shining forms. He mastered color theory and wrote vastly in his writings. He worked in German Bauhaus School of art, design and architecture, where he used his skills extensively. His paintings reflect his thinking, mood, beliefs and humor.

Paul Klee has a very definite style. His pictures are little difficult to classify. He had wide variety of painting styles such as oil paint, watercolor, ink, pastel, and etching. He also used canvas, burlap, muslin, linen, gauze, cardboard, metal foils, fabric, wallpaper, and newsprint. He did not satisfy with the above so he also tried using spray paint, knife application, stamping, glazing, and impasto. He is well associated with feelings of expression, cubism, and futurism etc. He also used mixed media oil with water colors and similar.

He used to experiment for long time in developing different color sequences and mixtures. The color textures used by him are very unique. They include

highly glaring colors and in contrast very smooth and light color combinations. He created many color combinations and used them in his paintings. The various styles and color combinations used gave him a unique identity. The Golden Fish, Ad Parnassum, and The Death and Fire are discussed below.

### **The Golden Fish:**

Paul Klee created this masterpiece in 1925. It was painted by using oil and watercolor on paper, which was mounted on cardboard. He had affection towards pets and animals. He also painted Trilling Nightingale, a Migratory Bird and many others. The Golden Fish is a magical fish with flashing gold color and a number of runic signs all over its body. The golden fish has scarlet color uncommon fins and a pink flower as an eye. He swims imperially with a lot of freedom in the deep and dark blue sea. The great golden fish is very much prominent in dark water with light blue plants everywhere. The painter is very keen to highlight the golden fish, so it was painted with glaring gold color, where others are dull colored. The other fishes are small and are in different colors in order to get the feel of an ocean or sea. It can be inferred from the picture as the golden fish is moving and also the other small fishes in the picture are running away from huge, beautiful golden fish. We may or may not understand its significance, but it draws the mysteriousness of his freedom and his secret world. This quite nobility and brightness are clearly visible through his paintings in common and specifically in the golden fish. The spellbinding color and dramatizing images is very well observed in this painting. Also there might be a strong reason for drawing many pictures of fishes.

Reference:

PAUL KLEE, THE GOLDENFISH, Page No: 104

### **Ad Parnassum:**

It was painted by using oil and casein on canvas in 1932. It is one of the major and most finely worked paintings in divisionist group. He was at his peak of his creative work during the time of Ad Parnassum.

Ad Parnassum is a conclusion to the series “ Magic Squares”, created by Klee in 1923. This conclusion came in 1932 that is 9 years after creating magic squares series. Here each element (in the painting) is similar to a theme in a polyphonic arrangement. Klee himself gives the definition of polyphony as, ‘ the simultaneity of several independent themes’. The golden-yellow morning sun and the divine mountain can be observed. Small dots are now recognizable tiny squares and rectangles.

The color combinations used are perfect and are changeable, so anyone who see’s can experiencethe transitions of colors. Both the dawn and the noon can be identified in the picture by having a clear look. The white narrow pointed wedge below the mountain and above the temple is noon and the long, sharp, narrow triangle above the sun signifies its dawn. Klee has never showed such phenomenon of time in his earlier paintings, as shown in this. The contours of the mountain and the ruins are very much clear. This shows that he had another picture in mind and tried to show his intentions and ideas of the second one in this picture only. The white narrow pointed wedge seems to be a platform. It can be observed that the light is brighter inside the pyramid rather that outside. Also each artistic element in Ad Parnassum

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is itself a dilution and distillation of several ideas and own personal experiences. The graphic element illustrates the entrance to Mount Parnassus, i. e. the home of Apollo and the Muses. This picture brings mosaics, which Klee admired in Venice.

Reference:

PAUL KLEE, AD PARNASSUM, Page No: 126.

### **Park Of Idols:**

It was painted by using watercolor on blackened paper in 1939. His creative works in that period were majorly based on angels and demons. When we first hear the name Park of Idols, we get two questions blinking in our minds. They are, what kind of “ idols”, and where are they placed, i. e. what kind of “ park” is it. Three idols and be clearly identified from the picture with distinct colors and shapes. The colors are not exactly decaying but they are pearlescent. The round ball like item in the picture is nothing but sun and the landscape is blue and grey-blue in color according to the painting. Here sun is not meant as a heavenly body but as an idol of worship, along with the idols in greenish yellow and reddish brown color.

The black background on which the painting is painted gives us divided feelings. The gaps between the idols where we can find the black background can be paths or they can be nothingness that confers numinous quality upon this picture. As all know everything looks different in black and can be inferred in different ways and depends on ones thinking. The usage of black background is apt because, on any other background their placement would be much less striking.

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Reference:

PAUL KLEE, PARK OF IDOLS, Page No: 150

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