



THE KISS (KLIMT)
(IN GERMAN DER KUSS)

Gustav Klimt



GUSTAV KLIMT (JULY 14, 1862 – FEBRUARY 6, 1918) WAS AN AUSTRIAN SYMBOLIST PAINTER AND ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE VIENNA SECESSION MOVEMENT. KLIMT IS NOTED FOR HIS PAINTINGS, MURALS, SKETCHES, AND OTHER OBJECTS D'ART. KLIMT'S PRIMARY SUBJECT WAS THE FEMALE BODY, AND HIS WORKS ARE MARKED BY A FRANK EROTICISM. GUSTAV KLIMT WAS BORN IN BAUMGARTEN, NEAR VIENNA IN THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE, THE SECOND OF SEVEN CHILDREN—THREE BOYS AND FOUR GIRLS. HIS MOTHER, ANNA KLIMT (NÉE FINSTER), HAD AN UNREALIZED AMBITION TO BE A MUSICAL PERFORMER. HIS FATHER, ERNST KLIMT THE ELDER, FORMERLY FROM BOHEMIA, WAS A GOLD ENGRAVER. ALL THREE OF THEIR SONS DISPLAYED ARTISTIC TALENT EARLY ON. KLIMT'S YOUNGER BROTHERS WERE ERNST KLIMT AND GEORG KLIMT.

THE KISS

- The Kiss (in German Der Kuss) is an oil-on-canvas painting with added gold leaf, silver and platinum by the Austrian Symbolist painter Gustav Klimt. It was painted at some point in 1907 and 1908, during the height of what scholars call his "Golden Period". It was exhibited in 1908 under the title Liebespaar (the lovers). as stated in the catalogue of the exhibition. The painting depicts a couple embracing each other, their bodies entwined in elaborate beautiful robes decorated in a style influenced by the contemporary Art Nouveau style and the organic forms of the earlier Arts and Crafts movement. The painting now hangs in the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere museum in the Belvedere, Vienna, and is considered a masterpiece of Vienna Secession (local variation of Art Nouveau) and Klimt's most popular work.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Gustav Klimt had an Avante-Garde approach to art and was a member of the Secessionist movement. Klimt was also a pioneer of a European art genre called Symbolism. Symbolism shared similarities with the Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movements, particularly the mystical motifs and a personal approach to art. Following his departure from the academic circles, Klimt painted three murals for the University of Vienna auditorium ceiling. Even at this early stage of his career, The Kiss painter received backlash and criticism for the erotic symbolism in his work. In the early 20th century, Klimt's murals, like the Beethoven Frieze (1902), were characterized by arbitrary yet bold decorative patterns using color, linear drawing, and gold leaf. Klimt was painting The Kiss (1908) during his Golden Phase. During this time, he also painted several portraits of fashionable Viennese women, including Adele Bloch-Bauer I (1907). Klimt treated the human figures within these paintings as two-dimensional, and they were surrounded by flat, brightly composed, and highly ornamental decoration. During his illustrious career, Klimt found many admirers among ambitious young artists like Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele. These artists endeavored to express the rawness of human experiences and feelings. Klimt also had several opponents within the Austrian art establishment as a result of his unashamed exploration of raw human sensuality and emotionality.



INSPIRATION AND THE BACKGROUND OF THE KISS

Love, intimacy, and sexuality are common themes found in Gustav Klimt's works.[citation needed] The Stoclet Frieze and the Beethoven Frieze are such examples of Klimt's focus on romantic intimacy. Both works are precursors to The Kiss and feature the recurring motif of an embracing couple. It is thought that Klimt and his companion Emilie Flöge modeled for the work, but there is no evidence or record to prove this. Others suggest the female was the model known as 'Red Hilda'; she bears strong resemblance to the model in his Woman with feather boa, Goldfish and Danaë. After visiting Ravenna in Italy, where he saw the Byzantine mosaics by San Vitale, Klimt composed "The Kiss". It is possible to see the Byzantine influence in many of Klimt's paintings during his Golden Period. For Klimt, the two-dimensional nature of the mosaics only enhanced the brilliant effect of the gold. Many art historians believe that the Byzantine influence may reflect Klimt's movements towards more stability by using inorganic and static forms. The Kiss is the height of Klimt's Golden Phase. Alongside The Tree of Life and The Beethoven Frieze, this piece completes an allegory representing the union of erotic and spiritual love and connection.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE KISS

The embracing couple takes center stage in this composition, with a dark and flat golden background framing them on either side. At the feet of the couple, we can see the edge of a flowery meadow beneath the woman's bare feet. A flowing yellow dress decorated with organic floral patterns and circular shapes encapsulates the woman. The florals continue into her hair, and the man wears a crown of ivy. A similarly colored robe with subtle swirls and geometric patterns is draped over the man's shoulders.

We cannot see the face of the man as he is bent over, cradling the woman's face between his hands and kissing her on the cheek. The woman's eyes are softly closed, with her face turned up towards the kiss and her one arm draping around his neck.

There are several theories about the intended identities of the man and woman wrapped in a loving embrace.

Some historians have argued that this composition may capture the kiss between Apollo and Daphne in the Greek myth, *Metamorphoses*. Although Daphne transformed into a laurel tree to escape the love of Apollo, he still embraces her.



The Significance of The Kiss

The Kiss is an incredibly significant piece for several reasons. Not only is this one of Klimt's most revered paintings, but it is also a celebrated example of the Art Nouveau movement. It is no wonder that The Kiss painting remains one of the most loved paintings of all time.

Reception

Klimt painted The Kiss which created a scandal and were criticized as both "pornographic" and evidence of "perverted excess". The works had recast the artist as an enfant terrible for his anti-authoritarian and anti-popularist views on art. He wrote, "If you can not please everyone with your deeds and your art, please a few".

The Kiss was exhibited in 1908 in Vienna in the Kunstschau – the building created in collaboration by Josef Hoffmann, Gustav Klimt, Otto Prutscher, Koloman Moser and many others, to coincide with the celebrations in Vienna for the sixtieth anniversary of Emperor Francis Joseph I's reign from June 1 to November 16 1908.

Interesting Facts

We have covered much of the history and significance of this well-known painting. There are, however, some little-known facts about the piece and the artist that we think are particularly fascinating and add to the rich history of Klimt and his unique style.

THE PRICE

- The price paid for The Kiss painting by the Austrian government was both record-breakingly high and an incredible bargain. When the Austrian government bought The Kiss from Klimt before he finished it, they paid a record-breaking 25,000 crowns for the painting. Today, this sum translates to around \$240,000. In terms of the art market today, this price may not seem that impressive. Before this sale, however, 500 crowns was the record for the most expensive painting. Although the price was high in the early 20th century, it is relatively paltry today. The Kiss is an Austrian national treasure, and it is unlikely that the Viennese museum would ever consider selling it. If it were to be put on auction, it is likely that The Kiss would once again break sales records. In 2006, Klimt's portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer sold for \$135 million, and at that time, it was the highest price ever paid for a painting. We can only imagine what The Kiss would be worth at auction today

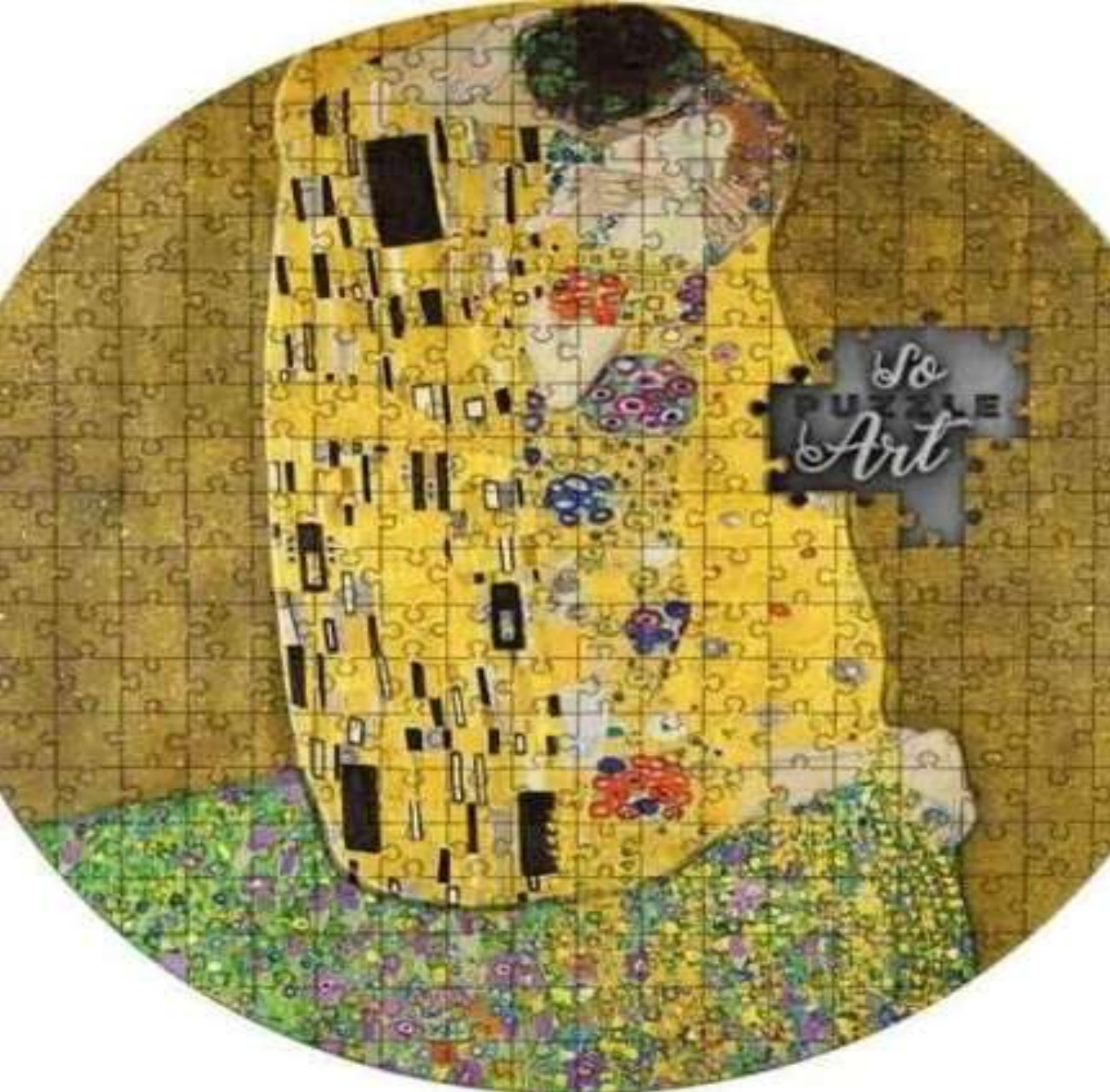
THERE IS A COIN WITH THE ARTIST OF THE KISS, GUSTAV KLIMT



- In 2003, a commemorative 100 Euro gold coin was issued by the Austrian mint. On one side of the coin is the bust of Gustav Klimt, and on the other is a small etching of The Kiss. Klimt and The Kiss are both significant and celebrated parts of Austria's history, and it seems fitting that Klimt's Golden Period is commemorated in this way.

SITES

- ❑ <https://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/kxQAAOSw-2VjKYKq/s-l500.jpg>
- ❑ <https://www.artsignaturedictionary.com/images/upload/29/2942b4f8fa5116039f95d5bc9df83b2f-400.jpg>
- ❑ <https://artincontext.org/the-kiss-gustav-klimt/>
- ❑ <https://wallpapersafari.com/the-kiss-klimt-wallpaper/>
- ❑ <https://mymodernmet.com/the-kiss-gustav-klimt/>
- ❑ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Kiss_\(Klimt\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Kiss_(Klimt))
- ❑ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Klimt
- ❑ <https://media.gettyimages.com/photos/austrian-painter-gustav-klimt-photograph-around-1890-picture-id143111995>
- ❑ https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/2238/5375/products/the_kiss_klimt_A2_1024x1024@2x.png?v=150278998



THANK YOU

ANDRIANA NIKOLOPOULOU
STUDENT FROM THE FIRST
HIGH SCHOOL OF AGIOS
DIMITRIOS .