

**Visual Analysis of Klimt's *The Kiss***

Student Name

University

Course

Professor Name

Date

## Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Visual Analysis of Klimt's *The Kiss*
  - A. The balance between golden garments and background
  - B. Body language of lovers
  - C. Softness of lines
- III. Conclusion

### **Visual Analysis of Klimt's *The Kiss***

Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss* is at the top of the list of the most commonly reproduced paintings in the world. Klimt was born in rural Vienna where he graduated from the School of Applied Arts (Cavallaro, 2017). *The Kiss* is Klimt's the most famous work that is currently displayed in the Austrian Museum in the Belvedere Palace (Binns, 2018). It is an oil painting where a man is kissing a woman face while standing in the field of flowers (Alseaidy, 2021). This painting is decorated with gold and silver foil, a famous technique adopted by Klimt during his "golden phase" (Hodge, 2019, p. 60). Klimt used soft lines for blending colors and geometric patterns, as well as: foil while working on the canvas. In his painting, Gustav Klimt depicted love by incorporating golden elements into garments to make the couple stand out and into surroundings to create a smooth transition between clothing and the background. Next, he duplicated the features of people's body language when they are in love, and using soft rising and falling lines to created an atmosphere of harmony and peace.

#### **The Balance Between Golden Garments and Background**

Gold foil was used by Klimt on garments to illustrate that lovers can create their own private world, which separates them from others. The man is wearing a golden robe which is decorated with dark geometric patterns, while the inside of his robe has golden swirls all over it. Similarly, the woman wears a golden dress covered in floral prints, which match her floral headband. Not only the woman but also the man has a headpiece, which is a headband made of vines. The clothing on the lovers is vibrant because of the gold foil, making the couple the main

focus of the painting. As a result, lovers catch the attention of viewers, while the background is not as eye-catching. Similar to the painting, in real life couples tend to be focused mainly on each other when they are alone. Consequently, everyone else becomes a part of the unnoticeable background part of their lives. Therefore, in *The Kiss* gold foil was used to highlight the love that separates the couple from the rest of the world.

Foil in the background symbolizes that despite the fact that lovers creating a separate world for their partner, love naturally blends into our daily lives. Small gold specks help with blending these two people with their surroundings. In addition, their clothing ends with golden threads made up of leaves that cohesively fall onto the floral ground. These details were used to show that although lovers are living in their own world, love is a natural phenomenon that gradually blends into our daily lives. Thus, by maintaining the balance between golden clothes and gold in the background, Klimt was able to draw the love between people.

### **Body Language of Lovers**

In addition to the application of gold foil, Gustav Klimt imitated the body language of lovers on the canvas to illustrate love. *The Kiss* shows the man bending over to kiss his lover's cheek. Thus, the intimacy of the kiss showcases that they love each other. In the painting man's face is turned away from the viewer, therefore, his facial expression can not be fully observed. The woman's face, on the other hand, can be easily seen. Her eyes are closed and her facial expression is calm while it is being kissed and slightly squeezed. The expression of love on her face convinces a viewer that both man and woman are enjoying the kiss and each others company. This pose was chosen by the author to show deep love and affection between these people.

Hand gestures point out the fact that people are in love, as well. Intertwined arms create an illusion that they want to stand closely while kissing. Consequently, two people holding each other and pulling each other closer are believed to be lovers since their pose represents love and affection. Furthermore, the woman's hands while hugging create an illusion that the woman is about to pull the man down to lay in the field. Intricate details of hand positions were carefully drawn to persuade the general public that love is motivating this man to kiss her. These nuances were used by Klimt to make observers believe that people in the painting are lovers. Therefore, body language drawn by Klimt mimics the actions of people who love each other in real life in order to convince the viewers that these two have feelings for each other.

### **Softness of Lines**

Not only the body language but also soft lines that blend colors between each other help with creating an illusion that they are at peace and in harmony. This, in turn, allows the author to further assure viewers that these people are in love. Gradual rising and falling lines blend distinctive features of this painting, such as the man, the woman, the floral field, and the background (Cavallaro, 2017). Curves that softly bend to create bodies in the painting create a sense of harmony between lovers, as if these people are a part of one thing, not two distinct people. These lines allow lovers to smoothly transition into the field of flowers (Cavallaro, 2017). This smooth change was used to showcase the fact that these two are at peace with nature.

Furthermore, this technique of using curves enabled Klimt to make changes in colors and color variations unnoticeable. As a result, color tones in the back are creating a cohesive background. Since there are no unexpected changes of color or straight lines that divide different parts of the painting, overall *The Kiss* creates an atmosphere of harmony. The feeling of harmony

was chosen by Gustav Klimt to channel the feeling of love. Similar to lovers in real life who seem to naturally blend with the surroundings, lovers painted in *The Kiss* seemed to be in harmony with their partner and nature.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, the technique of using gold foil, intricate work on body language, and gradual transitions between colors that were achieved by gradual lines allowed Gustav Klimt to illustrate a feeling of love between two people. Firstly, gold foil makes these people stand out in comparison with the background, which depicts the feeling of having a separate world with the partner. Moreover, gold particles in the background make these two people blend smoothly with the background, assuring the viewer that love is an organic part of people's lives. Furthermore, kissing, holding hands, and hugging effectively duplicates the body language of lovers. Lastly, soft transitions between colors create an illusion of harmony while looking at the painting. As a result, Gustav Klimt was able to create a piece that is capable of visually showing viewers what love is.

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