Analysis of Klimt’ artworks

1- The Kiss

Klimt’s most successful works include *The Kiss* (1907–08) is characterized by precisely linear drawing and the bold with decorative patterns of color and gold leaf. Nowhere, is Klimt’s use of ornament to display sexuality more important than here. *The Kiss as an impressive picture represents the conclusion of his works.* The Kiss represents his work at the height of his "Golden Period.

![The Kiss, Gustav Klimt, 1907-1908](image)

The man’s form is filled with erect squares and rectangles, while his lover’s is composed of circles and spirals. It shows the eventual passionate kiss more. The man is standing while the woman kneels on a raised surface. He turns the woman's head in order to kiss her cheek while they are involved in the very most private moments of love-making. The couples are enveloped in a golden robe with mosaic patterns. Rectangles represent the man's body and flowers, circles and graceful flowing lines fall over the contours of her body.

The Kiss is divided to four main shapes. The subject is in the middle. The bright yellow color shows the emphasis of the subject. Brown color caused a contrast Flower patterns are expanded through the background depicting unity. Forms and spaces are matching together. The dark small decorative shapes create balance between background and foreground. Rhythm in ornaments
represents a kind of movement through the figure. The artist is trying to show a metaphysical of love-making. All nature and human are united with each other. Special elements are associated to illustrate a graceful sense.

The Kiss owes much to the Byzantine mosaics in *Ravenna* that Klimt had seen on his travels. The use of gold for the figures with this background and fragmenting of patterns in small pieces are reminiscent of the mosaic technique. In The Kiss the areas is dominated with gold ornament. Hugging depicts consummation and self-absorption. There is an extension of secular in the portraits. Their union is intensified with the shape of combined figures and rhythm in ornaments.

![Figure 35: Byzantine mosaics in Ravenna, 6th - 7th century](image)

Using gold not only stands for wealth but also has a magical meaning. The kiss is a state of trance and it absorbs the eyes inside the painting. It is a symbolic universalized statement about sex. The Kiss, which symbolizes the marriage of material and the spiritual life and death And in general it shows unification of the dualities of human experience.

It is pointed out that Klimt’s painting is in the same time as Brancusi’s sculpture with the same title. To compare them, Brancusi is more modern than Klimt but both of them were attracted by various forms of exotic and folk art to achieve formal and spiritual intensity. Brancusi simplifies the forms but Klimt complicates his floral ornament with metaphor affection.

![Figure 36: The Kiss, 1908, Constantin Brancusi.](image)
2- Death and Life

In this artwork, there are two main parts, however there is a kind of relation between these two parts, it can be also separate in appearance. The right section depicts Life with a kind of dependence with tied up figures.

![Image of Death and Life by Gustav Klimt]

Figure 37: Death and life, Gustav Klimt

The coherence of the figures emphasizes on both secular and spiritual condition in another world, and the passive figures are conceding to the death. Some dominant colors as Purple, Violet and pink depict the secret of life.

![Image of Analysis of line and space in Death and Life]

Figure 38: Analysis of line and space in Death and life (Gustav Klimt)
There is a contrast in his work that the surface of his work is luxury both with means of relaxation and tension that expresses constantly. It depicts something like Seventh heaven and panic, life and death together. Even the portraits, with their timeless aspect, may be perceived as defying destiny. Although Klimt’s works, don’t clearly speak of destiny, it constitutes a kind of verification of desires and anxieties.

Figure 39: Golden Tarot of Klimt

Its pointing towards happiness is so special that it is a model example. It is a heroic thinking toward eternity and happiness. The figures are tied up and it reminds the gold ground of Byzantine art. Maybe the negative ground shows negating time thus it is creating a figure of eternity. Intertwined bodies infuse the idea of ecstasy. It happens in another world. It is decorative and iconic but not in this world. The circle of life and death is inside the faces. The
variety of colors catches viewers’ attention. The process of life is in a peaceful death that is inevitable. There is a combat between death and life that is embodied in the dark shadow of human body as the face is changed to a skull.

The life and death are close together for unity. Life is conceding the existence to the death at the end. Life cannot be understood without death. In personal worldviews, the theology of death is different. Meaning of death and life here is translating by emotions. They are defined by memories and transfer on a paper by an artist.
Egon Schiele

Historical Background

Egon Schiele, was born in 1890 in the sprawling multinational state of the Austro-Hungarian empire. He was a friend and student of Klimt, who wrestled with the rules of pre-war Bourgeois morality and the misery of the following war.

*Klimt's work had a strong influence on the paintings of Egon Schiele*, whom he would collaborate with to found the Kunsthalle (Hall of Art) in 1917. Schiele was close to his father since his childhood, however, his father died when he was 15. Beaten by losing his father, Schiele was much affected, as he has said that death played a great role in shaping his works. The death of his father made him lonely and the relationship With his mother got worse, which we can see from Arthur Roessler’s account: (Steiner, 1993:62-64)

"I cannot grasp why on earth my mother should treat me so very differently from the way I think I might expect and indeed demand! If it were only someone -else! but one’s own mother, of all people! It is unutterably sad... Often she behaves to me as one stranger behaves to another. It hurts me very much.” Egon Schiele

After studying at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, Egon Schiele met Gustav Klimt and joined the Vienna Secession movement in 1908. Schiele developed his style along with his interest in the psychology of Sigmund Freud, resulting in harsh Expressionist paintings often of nudes.
Schiele’s works create controversy among the Austrian officials, who confiscated and destroyed his work and then arrested him in 1912. His works emphasized expression over decoration, heightening the emotive power of line with a feverish tension. He eventually concentrated on the human figure, and his candid, agitated treatment of erotic and lesbian themes caused a sensation. His work took a calmer approach in 1915 that continued until his death from influenza in 1918.

![The Artist's Wife, Egon Schiele](image1) ![Couple d'amants, Egon Schiele](image2)

Figure 40: Power of lines in with a feverish tension Schiele drawing

Concept of artworks

Schiele lived in the times when existentialism came into being, so his works more or less related and affected by the existentialism.

Existentialism believes that all the early philosophy made the mistake of talking about the nature of world without talking the existence first. Existentialism emphasized the experience of oneself. The existence of everyone is unique and there are no same existences at all. Individual human beings have full responsibility for creating the meanings of their own lives. Existentialism objected the traditional method of studying. It believed that we can ignore all the profound
philosophy because every thing about us is determined by our existence. So what existentialism explores is simply *existence itself, its uniqueness*.

He was interested in the connection between *Eros, passion, death* and the *sacred*, and at one stage painted *pregnant and diseased women*, as well as the dismembered or truncated *nude self-portraits* of his later years.

Schiele himself was captivated by the figure of the sick artist, something that appears in the twisted, dislocated and in some cases petrifying bodies of the artist's self-portraiture. These paintings are a move away from the artist's illustrations of women where the study is of what we might now see as a more conventional erotic sexual subject, but in fact was original and challenging for the Vienna of the time. They involve less the sense of molder and death, obviously greatly influenced by the First World War that permeates his later work, depicting as it does, shadows of death behind declining skinny figures.

**Death and Pain as main subject**

In fact Schiele did not beautify his subjects. He was interested in their flaws and their inner darkness. By stripping the model of their clothes, they become anonymous. The viewer loses any sense of the social status of the subject. He depicted both the healthy and the ill with the same harsh observation. The figure's bodies are real.

![Figure 41: Death, Egon Schiele](image-url)
Schiele said, "Everything in life is death." He meant everything has complimentary forces; life and death, desire and indifference, good and bad. Schiele often painted a painful, fearful or worried self through impression and gesture. We can understand the death of his father, bad relationship with his mother and torture in prison all influenced his works.

Schiele expressed the most painful impression in his portrait, just as Erwin Mitsch said: The cry of suffering is followed by an exhausted collapse. The picture frame has become a prison from which there is no escape here by prison, Schiele referred to the loneliness and pain deep in his heart. From the living experience of Schiele, his arts tended to express death, pain and other negative themes. Whitford, 1981

He had written the following words:”I do not feel punished, rather purified for my art and my loved ones I shall gladly endure.” Whitford, 1981

The artist fragments his subject, but does so knowingly and with desire. This fragmentation is clearer in the contorted expressive art of his self-portraits, where ugliness is used to blur the established unity between beauty and moral perfection.
The moral of these images reflect the soulless and depressed affectation of art abstracted from the truths of human suffering, disease and pain, and a society twisted by its own embarrassed and repressed desire. Eros and Passion contain a shortage of images of Schiele's work.

Self portrait is one of the important special themes in his painting. It is not only an artwork but also reflect inner-side of the painter. The two meaning contains in a self-portrait which reveal true character of the painter and a construction of how to expose true me. It depicts how he deconstructs his courage and hospitality to reflect his existentialism on painting. Self-portrait has double meaning for artists. Not only does it expresses the emotional perspective of the artist, but also expresses the personality of the artist. His works embody his strong character and emotion.

Over man in Nietzsche's philosophy is the goal which humanity might set for itself. Nietzsche quotes from Zarathustra (Zartosht, Iranian ancient prophet): "man is something which ought to be overcome" which means that human being should advance itself to new generations continuously so that it goes consistently toward the over man.
The meaning of human and human's life is just its (moving forward) existence. Nietzsche like other existentialists believes that nothing is more meaningful and important than the existence of human itself. They make it base of their knowledge and thoughts about everything. Only human matters in the whole universe and human is changing from ape to a super advanced goal that we can call it superman or over man which is the perfect one. In the absence of God in Nietzsche's view, over man is the creator of new values and a solution to the problem of the death of God. In the absence of this creation, there is no base for criticizing or justifying any action. The background of Schiele’s works goes back to existentialists.

Every person’s existence is unique, and his self-portrait reflects this uniqueness in his artworks. Schiele’s works attained its greatness through the explosion of spiritual distortion and social corruption.
Analysis of Art works

Self portrait

In this painting the title is self Portrait. A sickly face is looking hopeful signs. It is filled with oil color surfaces. After analyzing, there are some geometric shapes. Darkness and lightness give dimension to see the surfaces perfectly. The majority of shapes are Squares. The colors in background and foreground are going through each other. The application of color is thick with rough texture. Totally there is a contrast between rich hot colors.
In this artwork, shows the artist wide-eyed and sensible, trapped against a geometric, patterned background. The gesture of the hand has composition itself and clearly intended to contain a specific meaning that the gesture depicts medieval representation of saints. The hand protects the breast, but the parted fingers seem to invite attack at one particular spot. The thumbs appear to have been amputated. The vase itself is a representation of a man’s head that has been merged, with Schiele’s own, darker identity. It recalls Gauguin’s painting of himself with a ceramic head, a work Schiele may have seen in reproduction.

![Figure 47: The weight and directions of the art work](image)

Schiele tried to create an unbalance artwork, to explain the emotion and expressive feeling of the artwork. The left side of the painting is too heavy and the portrait with the warm colors and confused lines try to bring an exciting mood of the artist.
Comparison (*The Kiss* and *Cardinal and nun*)

Cardinal and nun (the embrace), a modification of Klimt’s *The Kiss* (1907-8), introduces the shocking idea of carnal knowledge in the cloisters. It also exposes an understanding of ambiguous meaning of abstract form and of how this meaning can enhance more conventionally descriptive aspects of a composition. The *figures are locked together and overlapped within triangles*. They seem to float in an endless space. The shapes and colors are an emblem of religious.

Schiele has again adapted Klimt’s decorative approach, instead of using pattern to create a richly detailed surface and to energize empty spaces he focused of his scheme that is dominant in his painting. The two figures have been united as a bold, flat shape which emphasizes itself against the relatively empty, undecorated background.

Klimt continued fascinated by the dream. In Schiele’s work it has become a nightmare. In Klimt we find the *glamorous smile*, in Schiele it becomes *an anxiety, a frown caused by mental and physical nervousness*. The artist is in an uncertain and unstable world. Klimt’s effect on Schiele is clear enough, especially in the birthday greeting which Schiele drew in 1907 has many characteristic of Klimt’s illustrations.
Equally, a painting such as the Young woman in a black dress presents the sister full-face with a strong contrast, plays of Klimt’s style.

The *circular motifs* are used in a manner reminiscent of Klimt, emphasizing the shape of the area for applying and giving movement to the surface of the rigid figure. But Schiele *doesn’t cover the background with decorations* (especially in later works) as Klimt’s works.

Not only Schiele’s portraits owe much to Klimt. Danae is frankly based on Klimt’s symbolic figure compositions; it is decorative, erotic, and a mythological subject seen through the eyes of a Viennese aesthete.
Figure 52: Danae, 1909, Egon Schiele

Paintings and drawings of flowers of Schiele also shows Klimt’s influence. Klimt’s landscapes depict natural things with highly original in composition, rich in color and pattern. But they rarely evoke a mood. Mood is the main purpose of Schiele’s studies of plants and trees.

Figure 53: plum tree with fuchsias, c.1909
Conclusion

Art Nouveau artists explore abilities of visual elements to conduct their statistic and philosophical perception. There is a rich historical back ground in 19 century that helped the modern and especially Art Nouveau artists to come up with their creative art works.

The literature and philosophical ideas and fine arts always had influence on each other in the history. They used to exchange their ideas and concept and grow to gather. Art Nouveau style had a bid effect in his period and owed a lot to the previous movement in fine arts and literature and… such as: Symbolism and Romanticism, Rococo, Japanese style, Nabis, traditional decoration (craft), scientific evolutions.

Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt are two of the main important artists of Art Nouveau style that introduce new art forms. The decorative approaches, erotic, and mythological subject, symbolic elements were the most issues in their art works. Life and death, dream and metaphysical space were the main subject of artists. Klimt’s artworks are music of intoxicating sweetness and passionate that becomes in Schiele harsh, rough, conflicts and demoniac vision. Klimt’s huge creative influence still resonates in modern art, decorations and jewelry.