

KLIMT & THE KISS

DIRECTOR **ALI RAY** | PRODUCER **PHIL GRABSKY** | MUSIC BY **ASA BENNETT**

From the Director:

You may not know who painted it, when or why but I guarantee you will have seen Gustav Klimt's painting *The Kiss*.

This glittering, golden image of a couple locked in aqn embrace remains one of the most popular posters displayed on student bedroom walls. It is referenced in films, emblazoned on t-shirts, calendars and tote-bags. However, when an image like *The Kiss* becomes so familiar, we stop actually 'seeing' it. I wanted this film to rectify that.

As one of my interviewees says, "*The Kiss could only have been painted when it was, where it was and by who it was*". Thus, the film explores all of these elements that fed into the creation of this one iconic image. Turn of the century Vienna was a glorious and glamorous city with an intriguingly dark underbelly and, over the course of the film, we learn that this golden picture echoes those contradictions.

To understand the meaning or the making of a particular work of art, it seems obvious to turn to the words of the artist that created it. For myself as a film-maker telling Klimt's story this was not an option. He was famously and frustratingly tight-lipped when it came to discussing his work or indeed his infamous private life. I was wholly reliant on my excellent set of interviewees; the curators and historians who bring this and many of his other art works to life.

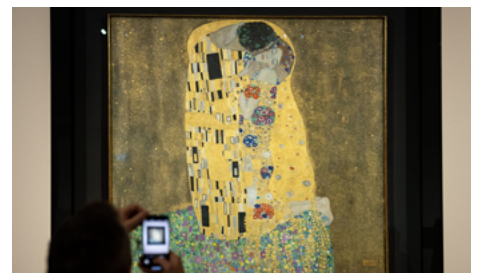
What actually is going on in the picture? What kind of kiss is this? It reminded me how much of ourselves we bring to a piece of art when we look at it. One of the very few quotes from Klimt is: "*whoever wants to know something about me should look attentively at my pictures and there seek to recognise what I am and what I want*".

This is what I hope we have done by showing the wealth of fascinating, soul-searching, ground-breaking and controversial works by Gustav Klimt. Special thanks must go to the Belvedere in Vienna for their invaluable assistance in making this film.

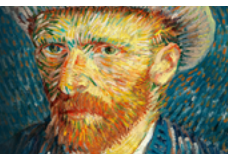
Ali Ray

"Another captivating Exhibition on Screen documentary"

Daily Telegraph



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