

## Art Masterpiece: 4th Grade, Lesson 6 (May)

### Gustav Klimt (1862 – 1918)

#### *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I (1907)*

Oil, Silver, and Gold on Canvas, 54" x 54"  
Neue Galerie, (German for "New Gallery") New York

---

**Pronounced:** GUUS-tahf

**Art Style:** Art Nouveau

**Art Terms:** Portrait, Mosaic, Pattern

**Activity:** Mosaic Design

**Medium:** Various Metallic Medium & Construction Paper

---



#### Meet the Artist

---

- Gustav Klimt was born in Austria in 1862. He had six brothers and sisters and was the son of a jewelry engraver. As a young man he studied art in Vienna and was successful as a mural artist painting for theatres, museums and wealthy art lovers.
- At 35, he founded an art organization, which promoted a certain type of art called **Art Nouveau**. Art Nouveau is French for "new art".
- In 1903, while Klimt was visiting Italy, he walked into a small dark church, there he saw early Christian Mosaics (Show printout, \***Empress Theodora and Her Court** for an example of a **mosaic**) that would influence his art for the rest of his life. He started to incorporate ornaments, symbols, patterns and gold backgrounds into his paintings. He used small quick brushstrokes to create what he called shimmering "painted mosaics".
- Although he did landscapes and murals, his most famous works are his **portraits** of wealthy clients. In these portraits only the subject's faces and hands look realistic. In the background, he used the painted mosaic technique by adding shining **patterns**, symbols and lines. He wanted the subject to look like a bejeweled work of art.
- Later in life, he went back to painting portraits that were more realistic, he used less gold and wanted to show more of the personality of the subject. Klimt died in 1918 at the age of 56.

#### About the Artwork

---

Klimt took three years to complete the painting. It shows elaborate and complex ornamentation as seen in the Art Nouveau style. The picture was

commissioned by Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer. As a wealthy industrialist who had made his fortune in the sugar industry, he sponsored the arts and favored and supported Gustav Klimt. Adele Bloch-Bauer became the only model who was painted twice by Klimt when he completed a second picture of her, *Adele Bloch-Bauer II*, in 1912.

The painting was sold for \$135 million in June 2006, which made it the most expensive painting at that time.

## **Art Style**

---

### **Art Nouveau**

- An elegant and decorative style that could be found in art, architecture, furniture, jewelry and interior design.
- Characteristics were curling vines and stylized plants, repeating patterns and the use of man-made materials.
- Art Nouveau artists often used ancient Greek and Rome for inspiration.

## **Art Terms**

---

### **Portraits**

- Pictures of a person or people.

### **Mosaic**

- Artwork created by decorating a surface with small inlaid pieces of stone, glass, tile or metal.

### **Patterns**

- The repetition of shapes, lines or colors in a design.

## **Questions about *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I***

---

- Does she look realistic? (Her face and hands)
- How is she connected to the background? (Gold dress and gold background)
- What really catches your eye...the lady or the gold color?
- What colors do you see?
- What patterns do you see?
- Which part looks like a mosaic? Why?

## **Activity**

---

Mosaic Design - Various Metallic Medium & Construction Paper

## **Supplies**

---

White drawing paper – 9” x 9”

Metallic mediums –

Metallic colored pencils – Silver, Gold  
Metallic paper cut into small shapes – 30 per student  
Paint – Silver, Gold  
Construction paper scraps  
Paint cups (small plastic cups) – please pour any unused paint back into bottles  
Water cups or bowls  
Paintbrushes  
Scissors  
Glue sticks or glue bottles  
Pencils  
Paper towels (located by the sink)  
\*Additional support material – photo printouts (There is NO ART PRINT AVAILABLE for this lesson so you will need to use the 8 1/2” x 11” printouts in the supply bin.)

### **Directions**

---

1. Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
2. They are going create their own mosaic design by repeating patterns using various metallic mediums.
3. Have the class look at the printouts of *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I* and *The Tree of Life* (located in the class supply bin). Point out the different shapes, patterns and how Klimt incorporated pops of colors into the design while keeping the gold color the main focus.
4. The paper does not need to be filled with all “mosaic” patterns but it does work best if it is all filled in. There can be solid areas of metallic paint, metallic colored pencil, etc...
5. If the students choose to use the metallic paper shapes have them select no more than 30 pieces.
6. Have the students incorporate pops of color using construction paper cut into various shapes. There should be roughly 80% metallic mediums and 20% colored construction paper.
7. Encourage creativity - The students can cut the metallic shapes to create new ones (e.g. cut triangles out of squares). They can draw shapes with the colored pencils on the paper shapes.
8. When the students are done have them title their artwork. Write the title on a label sticker and place it on the back of their work.

#### **\*Additional Support Material**

8 1/2” x 11” printouts of these images will be available in the supply bin.

**You can project the images on the pull down screen using the overhead projector and printouts in the supply bin.**

\* **Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I**



\* **The Tree of Life**



\* **Empress Theodora and Her Court** (example of a mosaic)

Artist unknown.

This mosaic is in the Basilica of San Vitale, a church in Ravenna, Italy

