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: Portrait with Mosaic Background
Medium: Colored Pencils and Various Metallic Medium

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 to the Neue Galerie in New York City reportedly for $135 million in June 2006, which made it at that time the most expensive painting.

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)
- What patterns do you see?
- What colors do you see?
- How is she connected to the background? (Gold dress and gold background)
- Which part looks like a mosaic? Why?

Activity

Portrait with Mosaic Background - Colored Pencils and Various Metallic Medium

Supplies

White drawing paper – 8 1/2” x 11”
Colored pencils
Metallic mediums –
  Metallic colored pencils
  Metallic paper cut into small shapes
  Paint – Silver, Gold
  Glitter glue
Paint cups (small plastic cups) – please pour any unused paint back into bottles
Water cups or bowls
Paintbrushes
Glue sticks
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.)

**Art Guide Notes**
This lesson will be used for the “Art Walk” in January. Please leave artwork in your grade level class folder located in the filing cabinet in room 6. If you would like to help with preparation for the “Art Walk” please let one of the Art Masterpiece coordinators know.

Directions
1. Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
2. They are going to sketch a person (full-length), either themselves or someone they know using colored pencils.
3. Have the class look at the printout (located in the class supply bin) of *Portrait of Mada Primavesi*, point out how the subject almost fills the entire page and ask them to do the same.
4. Once the students have completed their colored pencil portrait they will create “mosaic” effects in the background by repeating patterns using various metallic mediums.
5. The background 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…
6. Have the students select one or more metallic mediums to work with.
   Students can choose whether or not to add metallic to their portrait. Do not use metallic mediums on skin. (i.e. face, arms, hands, etc…)
7. Encourage creativity.
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.
“Art Walk” - Remember to please leave the artwork in your grade level class folder located in the filing cabinet in room 6. Make sure the students names are on the back of their work as well as the label sticker with their artwork title.

*Additional Support Material*
8 ½” x 11” printouts of these images will be available in the supply bin.

You can project the images on the pull down screen one of two ways: use the overhead projector and printouts in the supply bin or the teacher can bring up the images located on the “F Drive” on the school computer.

* Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I  * Portrait of Mada Primavesi

* 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