

philharmonia orchestra

Julian Johnson:

I feel today there are some artworks which, when you finally see the original, maybe are not as wonderful as you think. This one seems to jump out at you. I mean, it still seems to me absolutely astonishing – what they must have thought of that in 1908 I can't imagine.

Agnes Husslein-Arco:

The Kiss is something so personal and intimate, and the way it is painted in this embracement, in the tranquillity, with this gold... it says it all.

Julian Johnson:

One of the things I find so striking about this is the fact that he uses naturalistic drawing. The people are delineated in ways that we find familiar, but then these abstract patterns take away all the perspective; and I'm thinking I suppose of musical parallels where you've still got the expressive lines from the nineteenth century, the familiar things as it were, but then this fascination with more abstract ideas.

Agnes Husslein-Arco:

Absolutely, it has both in it.

Julian Johnson:

Exactly. But it's so rich. I mean the abstract is not dry here, it's beautifully colourful and rich.

Agnes Husslein-Arco:

It has everything. I mean, it's one of the most... I think it's *the* masterwork of the twentieth century, definitely.

When you think about the face of *The Kiss* over there where she's in harmony, and here she has a tension – although she embraces him, she's still also a little tense. I think this is a very very beautiful painting of a loving couple but if you compare these two things it's really powerful – the line, the body.

Christoph Grunenberg:

He was the next generation and someone who did very much look up to Klimt as a mentor, as a father figure, as a model, and that painting is of course in some ways a visualisation of that relationship. Though Schiele still puts himself quite clearly in the foreground, while behind him is Klimt with his eyes closed.

Esa-Pekka Salonen:

Klimt looks completely deranged in that picture (!). There's a lot of intensity in Schiele but Klimt is kind of out of it...

Christoph Grunenberg:

It could be almost like a death mask, a wreath around his head...

Esa-Pekka Salonen:

A subtle criticism of an older generation, no longer in touch...

Christoph Grunenberg:

I don't know... Possibly, but at the same time I think Schiele was hugely a great admirer of Klimt as well, that we do know. And we know that he was mutually supportive, but we also know that he was a bit of a groupie and a pain in the neck.

Agnes Husslein-Arco:

Contrary to Klimt, Klimt at the end of his life he was a star, he was *the* artist, and this... I mean, for a spectator, who wants to live with a painting, you need a lot of strength yourself to live with such a painting.

Julian Johnson:

I'm so struck with the contrast between this and where we started with Hans Makart. We're talking twenty, thirty years, it's nothing is it, and a completely different world.

Agnes Husslein-Arco:

A completely different world. The world changed totally in all aspects, but also at that point you have the monarchy is finishing, the empire is falling apart. What happened, you have to see it in a big context, you have to see it in a wider context.