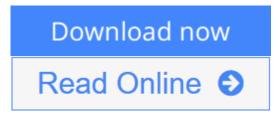


Gustav Klimt: From Drawing to Painting

By Christian M. Nebehay



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Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) is perhaps the most remarkable artists to have emerged from fin-de-siecle Vienna. Heavily influenced by Symbolism and Art Nouveau, Klimt developed a controversial and highly personal style emphasizing decorative form and flat pattern, and conveying a powerful yet mysterious sexuality. His relationship with his home city seemed ambivalent: central to the culture of his time he nonetheless exposed unflinchingly the rupture between the artist and a society dizzy with its own beauty, on the edge of collapse.



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This lavish book invites the reader to step into late 19th-century Vienna, with its intricately detailed social life and sumptuous luxury, not unlike the work of the artist who is the book's focus. The author, who knew Klimt in his last years and is a noted Klimt scholar, has brought together the paintings and the drawings from which they emerged in a way that enriches our knowledge of the artist and enhances the visual impact of his work. Using original sources, newly uncovered material, and a wealth of personal photographs, Nebehay provides a look into the major influence of Klimt upon his fellow artists and upon his society: his role as the first president of the Vienna Secession; his place in the lives of his students, among them Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka; and his interaction with all the major figures of this most dangerously intoxicating and exhilarating time. The book conveys the passions that were the subject of Klimt's work and his life. Highly recommended.

Paula Frosch, Metropolitan Museum of Art Lib., New York Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist

Why do we need yet another book on Klimt, the ultimate fin de si{Š}ecle artist? Because Klimt's gilt, stylized, and romantically sensual images are as spellbinding as ever, and Nebehay, who knew the artist, offers an illuminating behind-the-finished-canvas analysis of Klimt's most famous work. Nebehay places Klimt within the context of Vienna's cultural revolution, which nurtured everything from architecture to music. Klimt's interest in fashion, design, and theater as well as fine art led to close and productive relationships with other artists and opinion makers. Nebehay explores these associations in detail as he traces Klimt's artistic and personal evolution, but the most exciting aspect of this handsome volume is the juxtaposition of Klimt's rarely reproduced drawings and paintings. The underlying impetus for and structure of his elaborate canvases are revealed in Klimt's spontaneous, elegantly direct, and often even sexier sketches. While not essential, this is a worthy addition to in-depth art collections. *Donna Seaman*

From Kirkus Reviews

Andrew Wyeth's Helgas be damned. Klimt's erotic turn-of-the- century Viennese paintings have of late become popular iconographic fodder, and this handsome and luxuriant coffee-table extravaganza goes a long way to showing why. Nebehay's father was a friend and art dealer of Klimt's (18621918). The author himself is an Austrian antiquarian bookseller and scholar of Klimt, and of his notorious student, Egon Schiele. Nebehay puts his penchant for detail to great use as he incorporates a lively variety of visual sources: period postcards, posters, sepia photographs of the artist and his milieu, industrial-design objects of the period, examples of Viennese Ringstrasse neo-baroque architecture, and facsimile reproductions of sketchbook pages and correspondences. Special attention is paid to Vienna's utopian Secession movement, of which Klimt served as de facto leader. Its members included Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffmann, and Joseph Maria Olbrich. The work of these men, as well as that of Klimt's students Oskar Kokoschka and Schiele, is detailed in depth in the author's workmanlike and thoroughly annotated text. The book's real strength, though, is pictorial. The images are arranged in powerful juxtapositions. Klimt's loose and mellifluous pencil studies of nudes are counterposed with his intricate and stiffly stylized finished paintings. Elsewhere, full-bleed double-page spreads are effectively employed to reproduce sketchbook studies- -virtuoso doodlings in India ink of achingly erotic waifs and hollow-eyed death skulls. Lastly, a curriculum vitae time line is augmented with photos, Klimt's personal writings, and exhaustive supporting notes. In all, a package filled with studious information that succeeds foremost through its daring and stylish visual presentation. As art books go, this one offers quite the ride--heights of intoxicating decadence tethered down by scrupulous scholarly

documentation. -- Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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