

Mundane Magic



By Angie Stevens

While in Hungary,

I spent the afternoon enmeshed amongst the art housed on the endless floors of the Belvedere Museum, where amongst many famous works, I stood contemplating and savoring the richness of Austrian painter Gustav Klimt's. In many of his pieces I was drawn to his ability to zero in on one corner of a field, two faces or bodies entwined, giving the subject or scene of his inspiration a new life; one where they become the protagonist.

It is said that Klimt, having whisked away each summer in the early 1900's to Lake Attersee in Litzlberg, spent much of it basking in the rich, blooming landscapes home to fruit trees, glistening water, overgrown grasses and flashes of idyllic ecstasy. Klimt's focused eye held up to his telescope or makeshift cardboard viewfinders often bathed in the palate of colors offered through his lens, and the endless landscapes sprawled in front of him were honed in on and simplified to a single scene. Soon, after his paints and brushes mix and meddled with canvas, they became what we now revere as defining Art Nouveau period.

And just like my leads me down beautifully scanning a immortalize one part did the same with the he prepared to paint: fluence on how light driveway or how a when focused on,



became what we now masterpieces of the

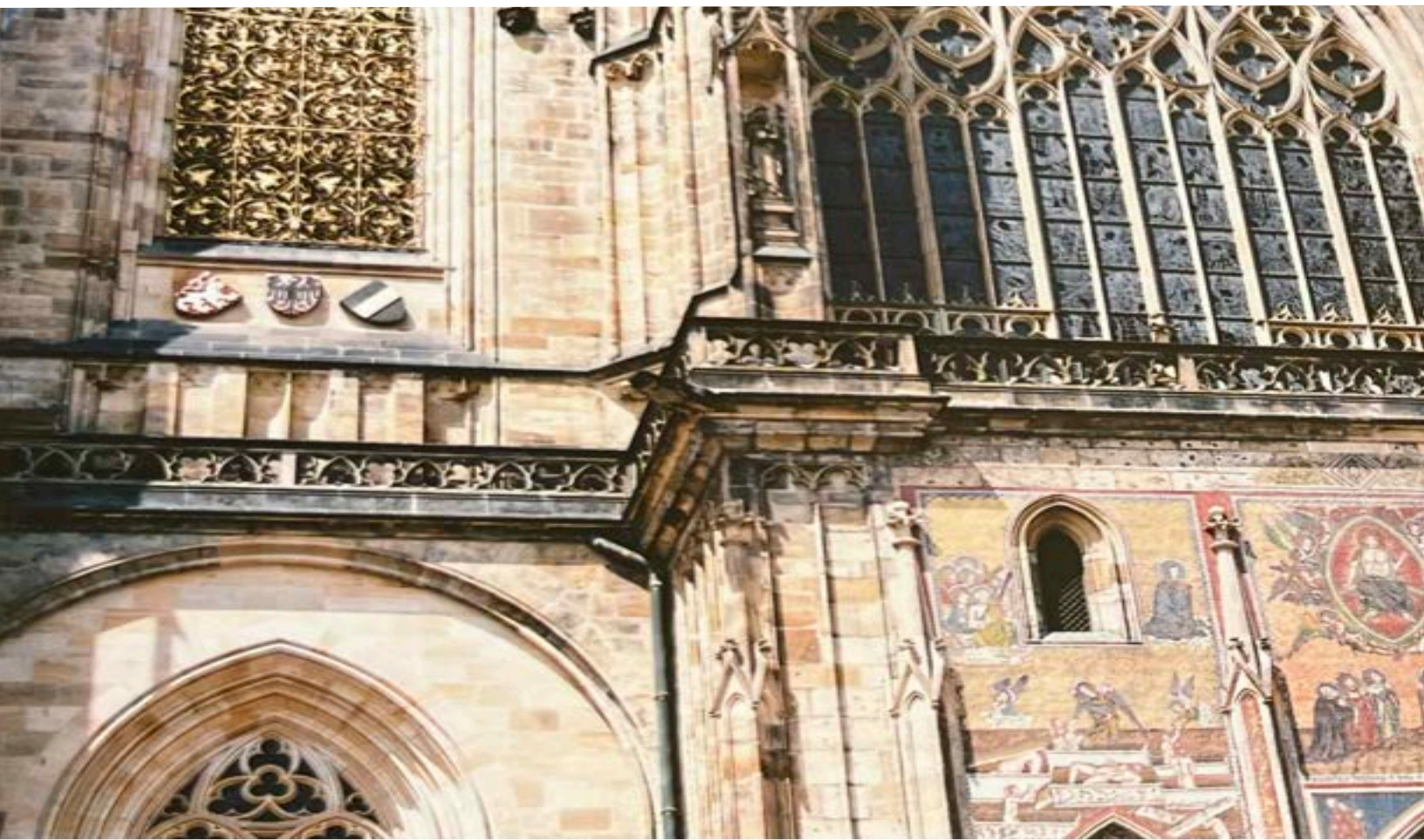
eye for photography tiful side streets, scene in attempts to of the whole, Klimt landscape subjects bestowing great in- may fall on a paved singular sunflower, can unfurl before the

human eye and stand for our emotions in certain experiences. Standing in the center of the museum room, the movement and noise, the people and the time dissolved as his paintings arched from the wall and grew in size before me.

It is for this reason I was most drawn to Klimt. His work and his creative process felt familiar to my very own, which had been leading me through Central Europe for weeks and allowing me to display my affection for the craziness of a crowd or the mundanity of a local park, through the simple act of noticing subtleties and giving them center stage in my viewfinder.

Photography, like Klimt's paintings, is not only the creation of a scene, but the elimination of everything bordering it and all the decisions that lead the creator to do so. Here are blips in time along my own travels where my creative eye chose to eliminate or enlarge, out of love and respect for the hidden magic nestled amongst the grandeur.







The streets had a slowness to them; this father and daughter were among the ease of the mid-afternoon.
Prague, Czech Republic



Two paths crossing.
Berlin, Germany



LEARNING TO NOTICE

and work with the scenes unfolding all around. There is magic within every passerby.

A cleaning woman of
Levanto, Italy



A moment at the window.
Prague, Czech Republic





IMPULSTANZ, Vienna's international dance festival where opportunities to let loose and let go are infused throughout the city, for any wanderer to stumble upon and say fuck it, let's dance. ***Movement*** in the form of youthful play, shot in Prague, Czech Republic.

We are resting in the grass by the Hochstrahlbrunnen landmark. My exhaustion receded into the ground along with my body and I dozed off and then awoke to a young girl of about four, who caught my eye. The blonde bowl cut, frilly dress — she seemed curious about the misty fountain in front of her. A feeling of nostalgic sadness coursed through me. ‘She looks like me when I was that age,’ I thought to myself. Or more, I looked like her. Children are fascinating and as I’ve been navigating this trip and my sense of self moving through each day, I’ve found the most comfort and familiarity with the young children I see. I think this stems from the ways in which travel taps into one’s innate sense of freedom and curious drive to experience, embodied of course, most wonderfully by the youth of today. And are we not constantly morphing into the next version of our youth?

I am merely just a young girl, now young in the new stage of my life. My youth is exploding out of me, still. Maybe forever. What a beautiful day it is to be here and have the time to stop and remember this, and carry on through the streets of Vienna.









ON REST

We're laying
in more grass,
recharging af-
ter a wonderful
day of pastries
and coffee and
shopping and
walking. I just
awoke from a
nap and feel
so connected
to all the life
happening
around me.
Groups of girls
lay giggling to
one another,
close by more
are sprawled



one head rested on another's back, hands clasped to phones or thumbing through books. When I first closed my eyes, a young father was situated on the edge of the grass with what looked like his mother and young son. They were playing with the boy's firetruck. And as the sounds of skateboards crack and pop against the pavement I can't help but be reminded of life, both the fragility and thick skin of our kind. The group of young skaters stop to rest together under the canopy of an old tree, soon they are dapping up older men who subtly place cigarettes into their palms as they receive wads of crumbled cash. They look about twelve. But it's wonderful, the couples and the elderly and the runners and homeless all mix and mingle here. I wonder if they know of our connection. Or perhaps

the natural elements of the park — the grass, the water, the flowers and fountain and benches that each of us have been drawn to this Friday afternoon — are silent workers, acting as the doorway to unity.









A

DAY

AT

THE

MUSEUM





We then sat by the water under groves of hanging trees where friends were catching up and lovers were intw



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ned and the ripples of water mixed and meddled with the glow of lights from the buildings across the way.



Two swans began to float by. We walked to get some cigarettes and an ice cream. Giggling and chatting on our way back, we then dropped back into the Holzmarkt area and returned to the water, surrounded by love.



I felt very appreciative to be able to dip into this city's world, even if it's been for a short while.

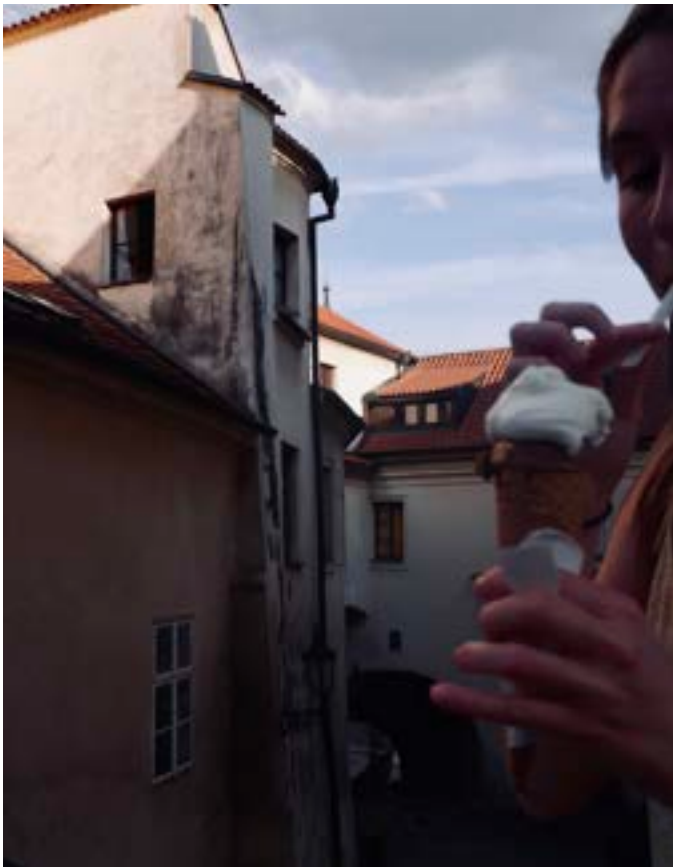




















Our wardrobes hung on lines between our beds, drying through the night as each of us came up to sleep from the bar, slipping into dreaming. We awoke to the sun seeping through the window, the room's small fan blowing our old shirts and socks ever-so slightly; an ode to one of our slower mornings on this trip as our exhaustion finally began catching up with our drive to keep exploring.

V i e n n a , A u s t r i a









To pack one's bag with the weight of displeasure for the
er as you feed and digest on the delicacy of foreign travel.
belief in the world; it starts by loosing and regaining the



state of things at home and slowly feel oneself get light-
To leave and return with a level of hope and energetic
eyes that see good. It starts here.



















It's
in-
evitable to
become your trip,
in a way where one
may not have expected. To be
enveloped in the subtle memories
of the weight of one's pack, the marks on
the back and the sweat that lingers after. The
constant movement, the quick feet catching trains and
the QR codes scanned. The afternoon strolls and late-night



prancing
around streets
full of people
and cars by
day, and
sleepless
wanderers
after dark.

It's as Steinbeck said; "We don't take a trip, a trip takes us."

