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IN-SIGHT:
KREMSER SCHMIDT.
ON HIS 300TH BIRTHDAY

Upper Belvedere
25 October 2018 to 3 February 2019



Portrait of the Cathedral Canon Wödl, c. 1768 © Belvedere, Vienna

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To mark the 300th birthday of Martin Johan Schmidt, also known as 'Kremser Schmidt', the Belvedere is dedicating an exhibition to the renowned Baroque painter as part of its IN-SIGHT series. Along with Paul Troger and Franz Anton Maulbertsch, the 'Austrian Rembrandt' remains one of the most important exemplars of eighteenth-century art in Central Europe. Works originating from the master make for substantial portion of the Belvedere's Baroque collection.

Stella Rollig, CEO of the Belvedere: *'The oeuvre of Kremser Schmidt is fascinating because it is characterized by an incredible thematic variety. Apart from his sacred art, the artist's lesser known late work offers insight into the world of the Baroque period. These particular works are shown special attention in this exhibition.'*

The exhibition therefore spans from the sacred in Kremser Schmidt's art to his extensive graphic and print works, focusing on his late secular and mythological depictions. As a result the artist's less familiar repertoire is made available, for instance his depictions of satyrs, nymphs, and a Venus with Cupid. Although identities of the early collectors of these paintings can no longer be determined, the exquisitely rendered images most likely adorned the private rooms of respectable Baroque art lovers. Paintings such as the *Zahnbrecher (Tooth Puller)* or the *Sägfeiler (Saw Filer)* are of particular interest today. They provide insight into everyday life in the eighteenth century, when dentistry was in its infancy and many crafts that are extinct today still existed.

'Kremser Schmidt' was born in 1718 in Grafenwörth and baptized on 25 September. There is no evidence as to when he earned the sobriquet 'Kremser Schmidt'. An obituary from 1802 refers to him as 'the famous painter named Kremferschmidt', so one may assume he was already known as such during his lifetime. He received his education from Johann Gottlieb Starmayr and may have possibly had further training in Vienna, although that is so far not proven. Around 1745, he began working as an independent artist. In 1768 he was admitted as a member to the royal and imperial Copperplate Engraving Academy (k.k. Kupferstecherakademie), a special

honour for him. It is presumed but not verified that he undertook a study trip to Venice. He chose Stein-bei-Krems to be his home, and it was from there that he carried out his commissions.

The reach of his influence is illustrated by his works in what is now Slovenia, where he was an eminent source of inspiration for artists, as well as by commissions from within the contemporary states of Germany, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. Anecdotally, Emperor Joseph II is said to have visited Kremser Schmidt at his house in Stein. Although this can be taken a true indication of the artist's fame, consequential commissions on the part of the Imperial court failed to materialize. An extensive body of paintings by his hand can be found at the Seitenstetten Abbey and in the Collegiate Church of St. Peter in Salzburg. Important commissions in the ecclesiastical field were supplemented by works for private individuals, as his small-format paintings and graphic prints appealed to numerous art lovers.

Georg Lechner, the curator of the exhibition: *'Kremser Schmidt is not a new discovery because during his lifetime he was already a legend and a classic. What we are showing is an artist who has, over the centuries, maintained his status as the last important Baroque painter – one whose works, at the same time, also pointed to the future.'*

His death in 1801 is often considered a late end to the long-lasting Baroque period. His influence via his students extended well into the nineteenth century, and his compositions continued to enjoy great popularity.

The artist's working method was not only influenced by Paul Troger and Franz Anton Maulbertsch but was also considerably inspired by Rembrandt. The distinctive chiaroscuro of his works earned him the title 'Austrian Rembrandt'. He indeed succeeded in bringing a special emphasis to visual storytelling by way of his command of light and abstention from embellishment.

Rupert Feuchtmüller's catalogue raisonné from 1989 lists around 1,100 works, although the actual number of pieces is higher. The collection of Baroque works at the Belvedere includes eighteen of Martin Johann Schmidt's own paintings and an additional number of drawings, printed graphic works, and paintings from his studio team. The exhibition is augmented by loans, many of which are from private collections that to this day include numerous works by Kremser Schmidt.

Exhibitions in the IN-SIGHT series are made possible through the generous support of the Dorotheum.

LIST OF OBJECTS IN THE EXHIBITION

Paul Haubenstricker
Portrait of the Painter Martin Johann
Schmidt, 1778, 1954 donation from Stella
Bonvicini, Tulln; Belvedere, Vienna

Sacral Art

Saint Martin, 1772
Former high altar painting of the parish
church in Kirchberg an der Pielach
Belvedere, Vienna

The Sermon of Saint James the Greater, c.
1764, Sketch for the high altar painting of
the parish church in Schwechat
Private collection

Workshop of Martin Johann Schmidt,
called Kremser Schmidt, The Sermon of
Saint James the Greater, probably after
1764, Copy of the sketch for the high altar
painting of the parish church in Schwechat
Belvedere, Vienna

Saint Giles, c. 1770, Sketch for the high
altar painting of the parish church in
Schweiggen, Universalmuseum Joanneum,
Alte Galerie, Graz

The Beheading of Saint Sixtus or Blaise (?),
c. 1775; Universalmuseum Joanneum, Alte
Galerie, Graz

Andrew the Apostle, c. 1775; Belvedere,
Vienna

Immaculata, c. 1779, Inverted sketch after
the side altar painting in the Gumpendorf
parish church in Vienna; Private collection

Koloman Fellner after Paul Haubenstricker
Portrait of the Painter Martin Johann
Schmidt, 1778, Private collection

Christ on the Cross, c. 1780
Study for a side altarpiece in the former
abbey church of Spital am Pyhrn;
Belvedere, Vienna

The Baptism of Christ, c. 1790; Sketch for
a side altar painting in Brno Cathedral
Universalmuseum Joanneum, Alte Galerie,
Graz

The Stoning of St. Stephen, c. 1792
Copy of an unknown sketch for the high
altarpiece of Biberbach parish church;
Belvedere, Vienna

Workshop of Martin Johann Schmidt,
called Kremser Schmidt
Christ on the Cross, c. 1797; Belvedere,
Vienna

The Immaculate Conception, 1764;
Belvedere, Vienna

Apotheosis of Saint John of Nepomuk,
1770; Belvedere, Vienna

The Baptism of Christ, 1773; Belvedere,
Vienna

The Deposition from the Cross, 1779;
Belvedere, Vienna

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Religious History Painting

The Blinding of Samson, c. 1760; Private collection

The Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter, 1785; Belvedere, Vienna

On loan from the Friends of the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere

Judith with the Head of Holofernes, 1785
Belvedere, Vienna

Mythology and History

The Judgement of Midas, 1768
Reception piece for Vienna's Engraving Academy
Picture Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

Venus in the Forge of Vulcan, c. 1768
Pendant painting to the reception piece for Vienna's Engraving Academy
Picture Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

The Judgement of Midas, 1768/71,
Belvedere, Vienna

Venus in the Forge of Vulcan, 1768/71,
Belvedere, Vienna

Pan Surprises a Sleeping Nymph, c. 1782,
Landessammlungen Niederösterreich

Pan and a Nymph with Their Children,
1784, Private collection, England

On loan from the Friends of the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere

Abraham's Sacrifice, probably 1780/90
Landessammlungen Niederösterreich

The Offerings of Cain and Abel, probably
1780/90

Landessammlungen Niederösterreich

Pan Playing the Flute with Nymphs, a Satyr and Children, 1784, Private collection, England

Venus and Cupid, 1788, Belvedere, Vienna

Family of Satyrs ("Raising of Young Satyrs"), 1776, Private collection

Family of Fauns, c. 1771, Private collection

Nymph and Faun with Cupid, c. 1795,
Belvedere, Vienna

Two Nymphs with Cupid, c. 1795,
Belvedere, Vienna

The Assassination of Caesar, 1780, Private collection

The Death of Lucretia, c. 1782, Study for the painting of the same title; Kunsthandel Giese & Schweiger, Vienna

The Death of Lucretia, c. 1782,
Kunsthandel Giese & Schweiger, Vienna

Allegory of Summer, um/c. 1791,
Belvedere, Vienna

Genre Scenes

Young Girls with a Fortune Teller, 1773;
Landessammlungen Niederösterreich, St.
Pölten

Woman Pacing Left, before 1787;
Albertina, Vienna

The Tooth Puller, 1787; Hofgalerie Ulrich
Hofstätter, Vienna

Saw Filer, c. 1778; Private collection

Beggars, 1753; Belvedere, Vienna

Standing Boy, 1753; Belvedere, Vienna

A Family of Beggars, 1753; Albertina,
Vienna

A Savoyard Boy, c. 1750; Albertina, Vienna

A Young Farm Labourer Leaning on a Rake
with a Barrow, c. 1750; Albertina, Vienna

Half Figure of a Young Woman Holding a
Child, c. 1750; Albertina, Vienna

Permanent loan from the Federal Ministry
for Education, Science, and Research,
Vienna

Tavern Scene, 1781; Belvedere, Vienna

Musicians, 1781; Belvedere, Vienna

Boy Playing the Fiddle, c. 1762; private
collection, Vienna

Ferdinand Landerer after Martin Johann
Schmidt, called Kremser Schmidt
Je me moque, Private collection

Joseph Carl Zaillner von Zaillenthal, c.
1764, Belvedere, Vienna

Ferdinand Landerer after Martin Johann
Schmidt, called Kremser Schmidt
Joseph Carl Zaillner von Zaillenthal, after
1764; 1983 gift from the estate of Karoline
Zdenek, Vienna, Belvedere, Vienna

Portrait of Cathedral Canon Wödl, c. 1768,
Belvedere, Vienna

Mother and Child, c. 1780,
Landessammlungen Niederösterreich

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	KREMSEK SCHMIDT. ON HIS 300TH BIRTHDAY
Exhibition duration	25 October 2018 to 3 February 2019
Exhibition venue	Upper Belvedere
Exhibits	63
Curator	Georg Lechner
Exhibition Catalogue	<i>Der Kremser Schmidt. Zum 300. Geburtstag</i> Series: Im Blick (In-Sight) Editors: Stella Rollig, Georg Lechner Authors: Maïke Hohn, Georg Lechner, Stella Rollig, Ferdinand Šerbelj, Elisabeth Vavra Graphic Design: Atelier Liska Wesle, Satz: Simone Pirker Self published, 152 pages, 96 pictures size: 16,5 x 23,5 cm, softcover German Edition, ISBN 978-3-903114-64-7 EUR 19,-
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