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THE BELVEDERE – AN OVERVIEW

The two Belvedere palaces were built in the early 18th century by the famous Baroque architect Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt to be used as the summer residence of Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736). One of Europe’s most stunning Baroque landmarks, this ensemble – comprising the Upper and Lower Belvedere and an extensive garden – is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Today the Belvedere houses the greatest collection of Austrian art, dating from the Middle Ages to the present day, complemented by the works of international artists including Claude Monet, Vincent van Gogh, and Max Beckmann. One of the highlights of the Vienna 1880–1914 collection is the world’s largest grouping of Gustav Klimt’s paintings – including the famous golden Art Nouveau icons The Kiss (Lovers) and Judith. Works by Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka are also included. Prominent pieces of French Impressionism and the most important collection of Viennese Biedermeier art are further attractions on display at the Upper Belvedere.

Linking the Lower and Upper Belvedere, the Palace Gardens are a gem of Baroque landscape architecture that, together with the two castles, form a harmonious whole declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. In the 18th century, the park, designed by garden architect Dominique Girard, served mainly as a stage for perambulation and conversation.

Today, the Lower Belvedere and the former Orangery are home to temporary exhibitions. The 1903 founding mandate of the Belvedere (then called Moderne Galerie) stipulated that the thematic focus of exhibition planning was to be on the presentation of Austrian art in an international context.

The Medieval Treasury, at the former Palace Stables of Prince Eugene later set up as a public art repository, offers insights into the art of the Middle Ages.

The Belvedere 21, built by Karl Schwanzer in 1958 as a pavilion for the World Exhibition in Brussels, was renovated and adapted according to plans devised by architect Adolf Krischanitz. Since November 2011, it has provided the Belvedere with exhibition space for Austrian art from 1945 to the present in an international context.
LOCATIONS

THE UPPER BELVEDERE:
Permanent Collection

Built between 1717 and 1723, the Upper Belvedere was designed by Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt. In the days of Prince Eugene, it served primarily for state functions, then became, during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa and Joseph II, one of the first public museums in the world as well as the exhibition venue for the imperial collections.

Today, Prince Eugene of Savoy’s former ceremonial palace permanently displays principal works from all sectors of the Belvedere collection, ranging from the Middle Ages to the present day. In addition to architectural highlights such as the historic Marble Hall, where the Austrian State Treaty was signed in 1955; the Baroque Palace Chapel; the impressive Grand Staircase; and the magnificent Sala Terrena, the Upper Belvedere houses some of the most important works of Austrian art history. The highlights include the world’s largest collection of Gustav Klimt’s paintings, including the famous golden Art Nouveau icons The Kiss (Lovers) and Judith. The collection of outstanding works of Art Nouveau and Viennese Secessionist art is rounded out with masterpieces by Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka as well as other international artists. In addition, the Belvedere has the most important collection of Viennese Biedermeier works – with numerous paintings by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller among others – a comprehensive Baroque collection, remarkable medieval works of art, as well as significant works from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Sala Terrena
Four powerful Atlases support the stuccoed, vaulted ceiling of the Sala Terrena (the ground floor hall). Originally this room was designed as a single spacious hall but after structural damages during the winter of 1732/33, the installation of the four columns became necessary. The hall opens onto to the garden side of the Upper Belvedere and leads to the Grand Staircase, thus the Sala Terrena serves both as the garden hall and vestibule.

Grand Staircase
The original main entrance, still visible today in the access ramps, is located on the southern side of the Upper Belvedere. From there, guests would have accessed the main floor of the palace directly via the Grand Staircase.

Carlone Hall
The Carlone Hall, or Painted Hall, was named after its creator, the northern Italian fresco master and itinerant artist Carlo Innocenzo Carlone (1686–1775). He painted the impressive ceiling fresco depicting the Triumphs of Aurora (1722/23), while the trompe l’oeil architecture was executed by Marcantonio Chiarini and Gaetano Fanti.
Marble Hall
The Marble Hall is the most magnificent room of the Upper Belvedere, dominated by reddish-brown marble and gildings. The ceiling fresco by Carlo Innocenzo Carlone, painted in 1721, shows Prince Eugene's eternal glory amidst the princely virtues, while History upholds his deeds and Fame praises the same. The illusionist architectural paintings were, in all likelihood, executed by Gaetano Fanti based on designs conceived by his father-in-law, Marcantonio Chiarini. The Marble Hall of the Belvedere came to be widely known to the general public for what was probably the most important event post–World War II: the signing of the Austrian State Treaty by Leopold Figl on May 15, 1955.

Palace Chapel
The octagonal Palace Chapel is located on the southeastern side of the Upper Belvedere. An engraving by Salomon Kleiner dating from the 1730s reveals that the chapel has been largely preserved in its original condition. The decorative pattern of the two-story central structure echoes the same of the Marble Hall. The altarpiece is also exquisite and shows the Resurrection of Christ by Francesco Solimena, one of the most significant exponents of Neapolitan Baroque. Rounding out the upper part of the stately room is a fresco by Carlo Innocenzo Carlone depicting the Holy Trinity against a backdrop of the heavens.
THE LOWER BELVEDERE
Temporary Exhibits

The construction of the Lower Belvedere was accomplished between 1712 and 1716, with Lucas von Hildebrandt as its architect. While the Lower Belvedere functioned as a residential palace, the Upper Belvedere served primarily for state purposes. Parts of the prince's collections were also housed in the Lower Belvedere.

Privy Garden
The former private garden of Prince Eugene of Savoy, the so-called Privy Garden, is located to the west of the Lower Belvedere and offers a particularly intimate setting. Once, this garden area divided into two terraces was bordered to the north by the Orangery and to the south by an aviary. Reserved exclusively for the prince and his closest companions, the gardens featured fountains, ornately decorated pavilions with pergolas, and magnificent grounds decorated with flowers. Today the garden is used in the summer for events (for example, Cinema in the Privy Garden).

Marble Hall
Originally, guests would have been welcomed with great ceremony in the Lower Belvedere's two-story Marble Hall. The structure of the walls borrows from the architecture of triumphal arches, while war trophies and representations of prisoners allude to Prince Eugene's successes as an imperial commander. By contrast, the oval-shaped plaster medallions showing scenes from the life of Apollo recall the prince's aesthetic interests. The ceiling fresco by Martino Altomonte depicts Apollo in a sun chariot. Prince Eugene is represented as a nude hero as Mercury announces gifts from the pope honoring the prince's achievements at the Battle of Peterwardein in 1716.

Marble Gallery
In the Marble Gallery the walls are also embellished with stucco war trophies referring to Prince Eugene's military successes. On the ceiling a stucco relief glorifies the prince, showing him at the center, enthroned and armed, being honored with awards while Peace approaches banishing Envy and Hatred.

Hall of Grotesques
Decorating sale terrene and garden pavilions with painted grotesques on walls and ceilings was a popular practice in Vienna of the early 18th century. Augsburg-born painter Jonas Drentwett adorned the ceiling of the Lower Belvedere's Hall of Grotesques with the Four Seasons and the Four Elements (in the corners). The windowless walls show Vulcan's Forge and the Three Graces embodying masculine and feminine principles. Most of these paintings have been preserved in their original condition. However, the wall facing the Privy Garden was hit by a bomb in 1945 and thus required restoration.
Gold Cabinet
Originally, the Marble Gallery was adjoined by a conversation room. Under Maria Theresa, this room was redesigned into a gold cabinet. Some of its decoration was taken from Prince Eugene's city palace on Himmelpfortgasse, with additions being made for the Lower Belvedere as required. The Gold Cabinet is believed to have been completed by 1765.

Palace Stables
The Palace Stables, once home to the prince's horses, serve today as a public art repository for medieval art. Featured works include a Romanesque crucifix, late-Gothic panel paintings and sculptures, and an altar piece that foreshadows elements of Renaissance art. Prominent masters such as Friedrich Pacher are represented, as are numerous works by anonymous painters and woodcarvers.

Orangery
The Orangery was originally a heated conservatory intended for orange trees. It featured retractable roof construction, which was rather uncommon for the time. Following Prince Eugene's death, the orange trees were transferred to Schönbrunn Palace and his Pomeranzenhaus (orangery) was converted into stables. After 1918, this building housed parts of the Moderne Galerie and, from 1953 to 2007, the Museum of Medieval Art. In 2007, the architect Susanne Zottl designed a modern, white cube exhibition space in the Orangery. Today, the space features major temporary exhibitions.
THE BELVEDERE 21:
Museum of Contemporary Art

The Belvedere 21 – Museum of Contemporary Art is a place of artistic production, reception, and reflection. Open and generously laid out, the building is a key work of Austrian post-war modernity and serves today as a space for discourse and experimentation, where society is explored and discussed. Austrian art of the 20th and 21st centuries and its integration into the international context stands at the center of the museum’s exhibition activities. As a site of the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, the Belvedere 21 shows temporary solo and group exhibitions alongside works from the contemporary art collection of the Belvedere. A comprehensive education program, film screenings, lectures, performances, and artist talks seek to encourage a dialogue with the public.

Building History
The Belvedere 21 is located in one of the most significant post-war-era buildings. The museum was initially designed as the Austrian pavilion by Viennese architect Karl Schwanzer for the 1958 Brussels World Expo. Its sleek formal structure, glass halls, and use of fresh building materials classed the pavilion at that time as a prime example of modern architecture. The building was reinstalled in the Wiener Schweizer Garten, adapted for the purposes of a museum and launched as the Museum of the 20th Century (“20er Haus”). Since 2011 it has been occupied by the Belvedere, initially as the “21er Haus,” and then from 2018 under the name “Belvedere 21.”

Blickle Kino
The Blickle Kino at Belvedere 21 is today Vienna’s only intact cinema from the 1950s. The generous support of Ursula Blickle enabled the 2012 renovation of the cinema, which was also originally designed as part of the 1958 World Expo Pavilion in Brussels. The Blickle Kino now meets all of today’s cinematic standards and has organized diverse programming series, for instance, the Blickle Archive Series. Its pivotal role is to promote public discussion of film and cinema as well as art and science.

Artothek des Bundes
The Artothek des Bundes collects, administers, and cares for artworks acquired by the Austrian state since 1948 in order to promote art. It thus provides a thorough documentation of modern and contemporary Austrian art. The collection is being constantly expanded and updated with artworks acquired by the responsible federal ministry.

Wotruba at the Belvedere 21
The works of the Austrian sculptor Fritz Wotruba (1907–1975) rank among the classics of modern sculpture. The Fritz Wotruba Private Foundation in the Belvedere 21 is conceived as a center of competence and research facility on the artist as well as a platform for modern sculpture and different perspectives regarding figure, body, and space.
GUSTAV KLIMT AND THE BELVEDERE

Gustav Klimt (1862–1918) and the Belvedere, which houses the most important collection of Austrian art, share a common bond. It was on the initiative of Klimt and other artists that the Moderne Galerie was founded in 1903 – the institution that has evolved into today’s Belvedere. The objective was to create a place for contemporary Austrian art to be presented in an international context. To this day, the Belvedere’s scientific activities and exhibition work are based on this premise.

FIRST ACQUISITIONS: The Kiss (Lovers)

Gustav Klimt was a highly respected artist during his lifetime, despite the fact that he withdrew from the public eye after a scandal surrounding his faculty paintings in 1905 to work from then on exclusively for the liberal bourgeoisie. By the time of his death in 1918, some of his works had already been acquired for the Moderne Galerie, including the world-famous Art Nouveau icon The Kiss (Lovers). The work was purchased by the Imperial-Royal Ministry for Culture and Education for the Moderne Galerie at the Vienna Kunstschau in 1908, the year it was created. It is still to this day considered to be the highlight of the Belvedere collection.

LARGEST COLLECTION OF KLIMT’S PAINTINGS

Owning altogether twenty-four works, the Belvedere holds the world’s largest collection of oil paintings by Gustav Klimt, including the two masterpieces from his Golden Period, The Kiss (Lovers) and Judith; major portraits (Sonja Knips, Fritza Riedler, and Johanna Staude, etc.); landscapes; and allegorical depictions. The Belvedere collection also includes one of Klimt’s sketchbooks and his monumental Beethoven Frieze at the Vienna Secession.

Highlight of the Klimt Collection at the Belvedere: The Kiss (Lovers)

Gustav Klimt’s masterpieces are on permanent display at the Upper Belvedere. In this comprehensive collection Klimt’s development can be traced from his early explorations of Historicism, through Secessionism, to, finally, his late work, which reveals the influence of the Fauves and a younger generation of Austrian artists, including Egon Schiele.

The undisputed highlight of the collection is Klimt’s world-renowned masterpiece The Kiss (Lovers). It shows the allegorical depiction of a pair of lovers in an entwined embrace. On an almost four-square-meter canvas, Klimt’s personal style is brought to life with impressive clarity. In the work, which incorporates design principles of not only Japanese art but also Byzantine mosaic works and medieval panel painting, the viewer will also detect the artist’s examination of the works of Auguste Rodin, George Minne, and Edvard Munch. The precious
ornamentation and the use of silver and gold plating create the impression that the couple is released from earthly life. *The Kiss (Lovers)* represents both the apex and the end-point of an artistic phase in Klimt's oeuvre, in which he juxtaposed naturalistically rendered, delicately painted sections of skin with a two-dimensional, ornamental conception of the other parts of the picture. The role of ornament in this case was to convey the symbolic message of the pictures.

Yet another Art Nouveau icon and an impressive example of Klimt's "Golden Period" is his portrait *Judith*. Heroine and savior of her people, she is portrayed as a sensuous and seductively provocative femme fatale. The ambivalence between the initial perception by Catholics of Judith as an allegory of chastity and the idea of the sexualized seductress contributes to the appeal and the subversive power of the picture.

The stylistic evolution of Klimt's portraits of women, commissioned by the wealthy Viennese bourgeoisie, can be clearly traced at the Belvedere from the early portrait of *Sonja Knips* (1898), to *Fritza Riedler* (1906), and on to the unfinished portrait of *Johanna Staude* (1917/18). During the summer months the artist frequently withdrew to the Attersee, where most of his landscape paintings, such as *Poppy Field* (1907), *The Sunflower* (1907), and *Avenue in Front of Kammer Castle* (1912), were created. On February 6, 1918, Gustav Klimt died at the age of 56 as a result of a stroke. He left behind numerous unfinished paintings including *Amalie Zuckerkandl* (1917) and *Adam and Eve* (1917), both of which are also in the holdings of the Belvedere collection.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Upper Belvedere
Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Daily 9 am to 6 pm
Fridays 9 am to 9 pm

Lower Belvedere, Orangery
Rennweg 6, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Daily 10 am to 6 pm
Fridays 10 am to 9 pm

Palace Stables
Medieval Treasury
Rennweg 6, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Daily 10 am to noon
For groups: by prior appointment

Belvedere 21
Schweizergarten, Arsenalstraße 1, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Wednesdays and Fridays 11 am to 9 pm
Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays 11 am to 6 pm
Open on public holidays

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