

IN-SIGHT:
JOSEF IGNAZ MILDORFER.
REBEL OF THE BAROQUE

Upper Belvedere
19 September 2019 to 6 January 2020



Josef Ignaz Mildorfer, Holy Trinity with the Saint Roch, Florian, Sebastian and John of Nepomuk (former altar painting of the Chapel of Thurnmühle Castle in Schwechat), c. 1755, oil on canvas; Photo: Johannes Stoll © Belvedere, Vienna

IN-SIGHT: JOSEF IGNAZ MILDORFER. REBEL OF THE BAROQUE

Upper Belvedere
19 September 2019 to 6 January 2020

The Belvedere is celebrating the 300th birthday of Josef Ignaz Mildorfer (1719–1775) by honoring the Baroque painter with an exhibition as part of its *IN-SIGHT* series. The Tyrolean native will thus be accorded his first monographic show during his jubilee year.

The Belvedere holds one of the artist's major museum pieces, the *Holy Trinity with Saint Roch, Florian, Sebastian, and John of Nepomuk*. The altarpiece was donated to the collection at the beginning of the 20th century and has been restored for the exhibition. The Belvedere is presenting the oeuvre of Josef Ignaz Mildorfer in context with the *IN-SIGHT* exhibition series. His art, moreover, can be closely linked with the wider Baroque collection of the Belvedere, which includes an expansive inventory of works by artists from his circle at the Vienna Art Academy.

CEO Stella Rollig says: "*The works by Vienna Academy artists from the mid-18th century play a significant role in the Baroque collection of the Belvedere. Our holdings of influential artistic forces of the time, such as Paul Troger and Franz Anton Maulbertsch, are ideally suited for placing the previously lesser-known Mildorfer in this larger context.*"

The show focuses on three critical aspects of Mildorfer's artistic work: his rare battle scenes, his role as a professor of painting at the Vienna Academy of Arts, and his commissions for upper echelons of the church, aristocracy, and bourgeoisie.

Maike Hohn, the exhibition curator, explains: "*Exhibitions challenge us to first and foremost think outside of the collection. It made sense to take a closer look at Mildorfer's connection to the academy and consider his commissions to various groups of buyers. It was important to me not only to portray Mildorfer as an artist but also to position him as a social figure in his own time with his network of colleagues and clients.*"

MILDORFER, PAINTER OF BATTLES AND PANDURS

In his early years, Mildorfer tested himself with a small number of works in the genre of battle painting in response to contemporary events of the then raging War of the Austrian Succession, which the young Habsburg Monarch Maria Theresa waged in numerous corners of the empire. Mildorfer's so-called "Pandurs," scenes of fighters from military auxiliary forces stationed on the southeastern borderlands of the Habsburg Empire, reflected current events and the keen public interest in those exotic, brash warriors.

MILDORFER AND THE VIENNA ACADEMY

In the mid-18th century, the Vienna Academy of Arts was a leading edge in the avant-garde. For about two decades beginning in the 1740s, Tyrolean painters such as Michael Angelo Unterberger, Paul Troger, and Mildorfer left their mark on the institution, where artists explored extreme forms of movement, expression, and light. For a short period the "Vienna Academic Style" prevailed as an artistic phenomenon, although it was soon overtaken by the rise of Classicism. Mildorfer – first as a student, then as a professor of painting – was part of this development that questioned the artistic conventions of the day.

MILDORFER'S COMMISSIONS FOR CHURCH, ARISTOCRACY, AND BOURGEOISIE

The many commissions Mildorfer executed during his lifetime included works contracted by the church initially and eventually those from patrons in aristocratic and bourgeoisie circles. Mildorfer is most known for his work in the pilgrimage church of Saint Mary in Hafnerberg (Lower Austria) not far from Vienna, for which he painted several altarpieces and frescoes – the cupola fresco being particularly noteworthy. From the late 1740s, the imperial court and members from nobility frequently requested works from Mildorfer; his frescoes for Empress Maria Theresa and her husband Franz I. Stephan in the Menagerie Pavilion at Schönbrunn and in the Maria Theresa crypt at the Kapuzinergruft (Imperial Crypt) remain well-preserved in situ to this day.

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition in the Upper Belvedere features slightly more than fifty exhibits, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and archival documents. Each thematic focus as mentioned above of Mildorfer's work is presented in an individual gallery. For the exhibition at the Upper Belvedere, works were gathered from various public and private collections in Austria, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Germany.

The mission of the *IN-SIGHT* series at the Upper Belvedere is to showcase artists in dialogue with the museum, as well as highlight and scientifically investigate works from the collection.

BIOGRAPHY

- 1719 Josef Ignaz Mildorfer is baptized on October 13 in Innsbruck. His parents are the painter Michael Ignaz and his wife Ursula, née Spillmann, widow of the painter Josef Waldmann. He gains his basic artistic training in his father's workshop.
- 1741 The first mention of Mildorfer in the records of the Vienna Academy Archives. He wins first prize in the drawing competition. The same year he starts to work for the pilgrimage church of Our Lady on the Hafnerberg. He paints altarpieces and frescoes for this church up until 1755.
- 1742 Mildorfer wins first prize in the Academy's painting competition. One of his battle paintings documenting his reaction to the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48) dates from the same year.
- 1743 The Augustinian canons at Neustift Abbey near Bressanone/Brixen (South Tyrol) commission Mildorfer to paint their high altarpiece for the monastery church. Mildorfer's father delivers the painting in 1744.
- 1745–46 Presumably paints the ceiling fresco of the chapel at Count Serényi's palace in Milotitz (Milotice, Czech Republic).
- 1747 His father dies. Mildorfer stays in Innsbruck for a time.
- 1748 Mildorfer receives his first imperial commission—painting the frescoes in the Old Court Theater. Duchess Maria Theresa Felicitas of Savoy, née Liechtenstein, also becomes a patron of the artist. She supplies him with frequent commissions up until her death in 1772. These include works for two of her foundations in Vienna: the Stiftskaserne and the Savoysches Damenstift.
- 1751 Mildorfer is elected professor of painting at the Academy for three years. Michael Angelo Unterberger takes up the post of Academy Rector.
- 1751–52 Mildorfer is awarded the imperial commission to paint the Menagerie Pavilion ceiling fresco at Schönbrunn Zoo.
- 1753 Mildorfer paints the cupola fresco in the Maria Theresa Vault at the Capuchin Church, Neuer Markt, Vienna. The crypt is consecrated on September 20, 1754.
- 1754 Mildorfer is reelected as professor. Paul Troger succeeds Michael Angelo Unterberger as Rector of the Academy for the following three years.
- 1755 Mildorfer delivers three altarpiece paintings commissioned by the court for the Capuchin Church near Schloss Holitsch (Holíč, Slovakia).
- 1756 Mildorfer agrees to execute four altarpiece paintings for the pilgrimage church in Dub on the March (Dub nad Moravou, Czech Republic).

belvedere

- 1757 Mildorfer is elected as professor of painting for the third time. He marries Franziska, daughter of the painter Franz Joseph Wiedon. The sculptor Balthasar Ferdinand Moll is their witness. He is later godfather to the only one of their six children to survive past early childhood.
- 1759 Mildorfer is barred from entering the Academy. The reasons for this exclusion are unknown. Other artists are banned, too.
- 1762–63 The imperial couple commission Mildorfer to paint frescoes in the Kärntnertortheater. This theater was once behind the State Opera House in Vienna, roughly in the position of Hotel Sacher today.
- 1763 Mildorfer is commissioned to paint three figural fields on the summer refectory ceiling at the Benedictine Abbey of Seitenstetten. His father-in-law executes the architectural and decorative painting in the hall.
- 1764–67 Mildorfer works for Prince Nikolaus Joseph Esterházy I, who is also the patron of the composer Joseph Haydn. At Esterházy Palace in Fertőd on Lake Neusiedl he adorns the palace chapel with a cupola fresco. In 1766 he agrees to paint the ceiling in the Banqueting Hall.
- 1769–70 The Pauline fathers commission Mildorfer to paint the frescoes in the pilgrimage church of Mariathal (Marianka) near Pressburg (Bratislava, Slovakia). His work has not survived.
- 1770 Academy Director Martin van Meytens dies. Mildorfer applies for the post but without success.
- 1775 Mildorfer dies of dropsy in Vienna on December 8 at the age of fifty-six.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	Josef Ignaz Mildorfer (1719–75). Rebel oft he Baroque
Exhibition duration	19 September 2019 to 6 January 2020
Venue	Upper Belvedere
Exhibits	55 (Paintings, Sculptures, Graphic, Drawings, Archival materials)
Curator	Maike Hohn
Exhibition Management	Stephan Pumberger, Martina Pfeiffer-Carich
Exhibition Catalogue	<i>Josef Ignaz Mildorfer. Rebell des Barock</i> Series: In-Sight Editors: Stella Rollig, Maike Hohn Authors: Marina Bregovac Pisk, Andreas Gamerith, Ulrike Hirhager, Maike Hohn, Elisabeth Leube-Payer, Stella Rollig, Eva Schober Graphic design: Atelier Liska Wesle, Vienna / Berlin 16,5 × 23,5 cm, Softcover; 184 pages, 147 pictures German Edition ISBN 978-3-903114-73-9 EUR 19,-
Contact	Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-0 www.belvedere.at
Guided Tours	T + 43 1 795 57-134 M public@belvedere.at
Opening Hours	daily 9am to 6pm Friday 9am to 9pm
Regular Entry	€ 16,- (Upper Belvedere)
Press Contact	Press Office Belvedere Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-177 M presse@belvedere.at

Complimentary images can be downloaded for press purposes at www.belvedere.at/press.
#Belvedereinsight