

belvedere

IN-SIGHT

JOHANN JAKOB HARTMANN

Upper Belvedere

(Planned 22 January) 9 February until 29 August 2021



Johann Jakob Hartmann, *Allegory of Water*, undated
Photo: Johannes Stoll / Belvedere, Vienna

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The IN-SIGHT exhibition about Johann Jakob Hartmann, a Baroque painter from Bohemia, sees the Belvedere retrace the origins of its collection. Several of Hartmann's works have been on display at the Upper Belvedere ever since the late eighteenth century. These comprise depictions of the elements earth, water, fire, and air—four of the six pictures by the artist that were acquired for the Imperial Gallery. Following the restoration of these paintings by the Belvedere, it is now possible to reunite them in this show after more than a century.

Stella Rollig, CEO of the Belvedere: "This exhibition is a fascinating project in relation to the 'archaeology' of the collection, a journey back in time allowing us to recreate an historical ensemble of works from the Imperial Picture Gallery while also discovering a successful painter from the Baroque period."

Johann Jakob Hartmann was probably born in around 1658 and he lived and worked in Bohemia until at least 1736. By pioneering the genre of landscape painting, which was rather unusual at the time, he established something of a monopoly in this region of Europe. Inspiration was provided by the great Flemish masters, like Jan Brueghel the Elder and Gillis van Coninxloo, who had been active roughly a century before him. Hartmann's art is characterized by his meticulous forest landscapes, enriched with a varied cast of people and animals. Crowds of figures in lively scenes complete his striking, spacious images of nature. Along with allegorical themes, the master also painted religious and secular subjects. He soon came to the attention of the court in Vienna. But when acquiring works for the imperial collection, they opted for more

conventional motifs that had been popular in both Mannerist and Baroque art—depictions of the Four Elements earth, water, air, and fire.

Georg Lechner, curator of the exhibition: “Despite the simplicity of the theme, the different depictions for the elements earth and water show that the artist was certainly not working in a repetitive way. In fact, he was always varying his images and enriching these with further components that make closer scrutiny of the originals highly worthwhile.”

This body of work is remarkable in another respect as well: It is a rare example of a complete ensemble that has survived to this day, as, through history, comparable series tended to be separated when they changed owners.

In the late eighteenth century, the series of the Four Elements, and two further works by Hartmann, entered the Imperial Picture Gallery, and hence the Upper Belvedere, where the art collection had been located since 1776. In the twentieth century, the pictures were transferred to the Lower Belvedere as part of the Baroque Museum that opened in 1923. Their public display thereafter was limited and they remained for long periods in the stores, which left its traces and the pictures required conservation treatment as a result. The Belvedere aimed to restore the paintings to their fundamental essence in a genuine reflection of the artist’s original intentions. The challenge was dealing with the altered state in which objects with centuries of history are usually found. They have been restored several times in the past, and serious damage has been repaired using standard restoration techniques of the time, often altering or even ruining the original work.

Now, after more than a century, and following the recent restoration project by the Belvedere conservation workshop, all six paintings can be reunited in this IN-SIGHT exhibition. They are presented in the temporary exhibition rooms on the Upper

Belvedere's ground floor together with a documentation of the life and work of Johann Jakob Hartmann.

IN-SIGHT is a series of temporary exhibitions, currently held twice a year at the Upper Belvedere, that shines a spotlight on particular aspects of the museum's collection, analyzing artworks from new research perspectives and presenting these to the public.

BIOGRAPHY OF JOHANN JAKOB HARTMANN

- c. 1658 Birth of Johann Jakob Hartmann
- 1658 The artist's family settles in Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg)
- 1687 Following the death of his father Martin Hartmann, the young painter leaves his native town
- 1690 Marries a gardener's daughter Anna Theresia Olivová in Hluboš
- 1694–1703 Their five children are born, including sons Franz Anton and Wenzel Johann, who would later become painters and work in their father's workshop
- from c. 1702 Hartmann is based in Prague but retains ties with his home town of Kutná Hora, making return visits to buy and sell houses until 1725
- 1716 Awarded citizenship of the Old Town of Prague
- 1728 His son Franz Anton dies in Prague
- 1736 Johann Jakob Hartmann is documented as a godfather
- 1745 Death of his son Wenzel Johann; documented that Johann Jakob Hartmann has already died

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	IN-SIGHT: Johann Jakob Hartmann
Exhibition duration	9 February until 29 August 2021
Venue	Upper Belvedere
Exhibits	20
Curator	Georg Lechner
Exhibition management	Kristof Viola
Catalogue	<i>Johann Jakob Hartmann</i> Series: In-Sight Editors: Stella Rollig, Georg Lechner Authors: Georg Lechner, János Korényi, Marcela Vondráčková, Alexander Wied, Stella Rollig Graphic design: Atelier Liska Wesle about 128 pages and. 83 pictures Softcover German Edition ISBN 978-3-903327-19-1 EUR 19,-
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