

BELVEDERE 2021/22: Review and Outlook

2022 Lower Belvedere re-opening to feature Salvador Dalí

Vienna (OTS) – **The museum year 2022 will kick off with the re-opening of the newly refurbished Lower Belvedere and two big names: Salvador Dalí and Sigmund Freud. This year, due to the Corona pandemic, visitor numbers and revenues for 2021 dropped just as much as they did in 2020.**

Stella Rollig, the museum's CEO, says: *“Despite our desire to see this crisis end, we have learned in 2021 to live with it. Especially in these trying times, the museum remains in fact a place of strength, where the arts of the past provide distance from the present and the arts of the present inspire resilience.”*

The third and fourth waves of the pandemic, with their lockdowns and travel restrictions, meant that in 2021, as in 2020, the Belvedere experienced an eighty percent drop in visitors compared to the pre-pandemic period.

CFO Wolfgang Bergmann notes: *“We hope to see a significant recovery in 2022, but realistically we can’t expect to reach pre-crisis levels before 2023 at the earliest, and probably not until 2024.”*

The Belvedere used 2021 to invest in construction and infrastructure improvements: As part of a technical upgrade of the Lower Belvedere, fire protection, security, and air-conditioning technology were updated to meet the latest standards. Streamlined wayfinding, expanded barrier-free access, and the establishment of a café have enhanced the visitor experience. Another step in the multi-year program to renovate windows was completed in December.

The focus on the museum's own collection has proved to be a strength in terms of exhibition activities. Comprehensive exhibitions such as *Avant-Garde and the Contemporary* at the Belvedere 21 and *Better Times? Waldmüller and Biedermeier* in

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Vienna at the Upper Belvedere not only surveyed the museum's holdings and presented them in new and unexpected ways, but also critically examined established themes within the field of art history.

In 2021, the Upper Belvedere and Belvedere 21 hosted a total of eighteen exhibitions, including a major show on Joseph Beuys to mark his one hundredth birthday. The success of the exhibition *Klimt. The Secession and Italy*, which opened on 26 October at the Museo di Roma–Palazzo Braschi under the curatorial direction of the Belvedere, has exceeded all expectations with nearly 70,000 visitors to date. With the digital project *Klimt vs. Klimt: The Man of Contradictions*, the Belvedere, in collaboration with Google Arts & Culture, realized a comprehensive, broad-based research and mediation project that is accessible online and free of charge, thus reaffirming its leadership in the study of Austria's most famous artist. The Belvedere has been awarded the Austrian Ecolabel for being a Green Museum (link: <https://www.belvedere.at/en/green-belvedere>), in recognition of the museum's environmental initiatives.

2022: A Total of Twenty-Two Exhibitions Are Planned at the Belvedere's Three Locations

The long-planned Salvador Dalí exhibition marks the beginning of an art year in which: the Lower Belvedere will present itself in a fresh look, collection holdings will be presented in a new light, and internationally renowned artists will develop specific projects for presentation in various Belvedere venues.

From 28 January, the **Lower Belvedere** will present the show *Dalí – Freud. An Obsession*, which showcases the influence of the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud on Salvador Dalí's work. After more than a decade, the most famous Surrealist will once again be the subject of an exhibition in Vienna – for the first time as a narration of Dalí's relationship to this city and the founder of psychoanalysis.

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The exhibition *Viva Venezia! The Invention of Venice in the 19th Century* opens on 17 February and is dedicated to the mythical lagoon city. In June, a solo exhibition will cover the work of landscape painter Joseph Rebell, who, beginning in 1824, served as director of the Imperial Picture Gallery and keeper of the Belvedere palace. In September, the exhibition *GROW. The Tree in Art* will take an in-depth look at mythical, symbolic, ecological, philosophical, and, of course, artistic aspects of our relationship to trees.

At the **Upper Belvedere**, starting on 24 February, Marc Quinn will juxtapose his eight-part series of works, *Emotional Detox*, with the famous "character heads" of Baroque sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt that inspired his sculptures. The exhibition *True to Life* will display realistic paintings from the collection dating from 1850 to 1950 as a mirror of their social environment starting on March 18. Beginning in April, the artist Georg Eisler will be *In-Sight*, and the *Carlone Contemporary series* will feature works by Lena Henke and Rona Pondick.

At the **Belvedere 21**, starting on 24 March, a thematic exhibition will examine the (cultural) phenomenon of time through contemporary photographs and films from the Belvedere's collection. Following the just-opened solo exhibition by Ugo Rondinone, the main gallery will showcase sculptural works by Rebecca Warren starting 15 July, which the British artist is reworking for her first museum exhibition in Austria. Stanislava Kovalcikova, born in Slovakia in 1988, will be featured as an emerging artist with her enigmatic figurative paintings beginning on 16 September. Gerwald Rockenschau, one of Austria's leading international artists, will debut a radically conceived installation in the main gallery starting on 25 November.

The **Belvedere 21** will host Vienna's new media art festival CIVA between 18 and 26 February, with the theme of "Embodied Structures." Also planned for 2022 is a

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collaboration with the Wiener Festwochen, including a project celebrating Iannis Xenakis's one hundredth birthday.

The **public program series** "Joint Ventures" focuses on "Feminism and Diversity in the Arts and Culture" in March, "Queering the Belvedere" in June, "Retelling Stories" about the wars in former Yugoslavia in the summer, and the topic of ecology in the fall.

The Belvedere Research Center will host a series of conferences on the digital transformation of art museums between 17 and 21 January. "The Art Museum in the Digital Age" will feature a keynote address by Max Hollein along with contributions from and discussions with more than twenty-five international speakers on this timely topic of museum practice today.

Further information: [belvedere.at/presse/en](https://www.belvedere.at/presse/en)

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