

## SPECIAL GUEST: ADELE BLOCH-BAUER II

After extensive research, Gustav Klimt's portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer II will be presented in a special exhibition at the Upper Belvedere – November 9, 2023 to February 11, 2024

November 8, 2023

The artwork *Adele Bloch-Bauer II* (1912–13) is back in Vienna to undergo scientific analysis and restoration in the Belvedere's workshops. Until February 2024, this occasion presents a unique opportunity to witness this outstanding privately owned late work by Gustav Klimt in its original form and gain insight into the artist's painting technique, thanks to current research findings.

*General Director Stella Rollig: We would like to express our gratitude to the lenders for their trust in allowing us to carry out scientific examinations and restoration work on this significant work by Gustav Klimt. We are especially delighted to be able to present the painting, along with its history and our latest insights, to our visitors for a limited time.*

As a center of expertise for research into Gustav Klimt's paintings, the Belvedere continuously conducts scientific analyses that offer exciting new revelations into the structure of the artworks and the creative process behind them. In 2023, *Adele Bloch-Bauer II* became the fourth work by the Jugendstil painter not in the Belvedere's collection to be examined. In addition to *Water Serpents II* last spring, *Life is a Struggle (The Golden Knight)* and *Eugenia Primavesi* have also been assessed by the Belvedere's restoration department.

*Stefanie Jahn, head of restoration at the Belvedere, states: By gently and meticulously cleaning the surface of Adele Bloch-Bauer II, the gray film was removed and the clear pink, green, and blue tones were revived. Using the latest examination methods, it was possible to look beneath the surface of the painting and gain insights into the creative process.*

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X-Ray images and infrared reflectography recordings now reveal a different initial composition. In that version, Adele stands on an oval carpet and is positioned closer to the viewer. Her dress is much more voluminous. Below the jeweled necklace, her neck is exposed, with her feathered hat extending opulently out to the edge of the painting.

Curator Markus Fellingner notes: *Adele Bloch-Bauer II is the first major commissioned portrait that Klimt executed in his late Modernist style. In contrast to the initial portrait he painted of her five years earlier, he now presents Adele Bloch-Bauer standing squarely, portraying her as a strong and self-assured woman. The painting is dominated by vibrant colors and, at first glance, it appears to have been executed with virtuosic confidence. Our examinations, however, show us that Klimt heavily reworked the painting and struggled intensely to achieve the optimal forms.*

The name Bloch-Bauer is inescapably linked to the Belvedere. Adele and Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer were lending their paintings to the museum as early as 1919. Decades later, these same paintings found themselves at the center of the world's most sensational art restitution case. In 2006, following a decision by an arbitration court, *Adele Bloch-Bauer II* and four other paintings were returned to their legal successors. The painting was auctioned the same year and since then it has remained in private collections.

On November 16, Gustav Klimt's *Judith* will also return to the Upper Belvedere, after having been away on loan for the exhibition *Secessionen. Klimt, Stuck, Liebermann* at the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin. In 2025, the exhibition *Gustav Klimt. Pigment & Pixel* at the Lower Belvedere promises to provide a glimpse beneath the surface of Klimt's world of colors.

*Special Guest: Adele Bloch-Bauer II* has been made possible in cooperation with Rosaline Wong and HomeArt.

For more information on the exhibition and high-resolution press photos please visit [www.belvedere.at/en/press](http://www.belvedere.at/en/press)

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