

THE MUSEUM AT ITS BEST: REOPENING THE LOWER BELVEDERE

On 28 January, with the exhibition *Dalí – Freud. An Obsession* at the Orangery, the Lower Belvedere reopens its doors to the public after a year and a half. The redesigned entrance area, improved wayfinding, and greater accessibility will enhance the visitor experience, while fire protection, security, and air-conditioning systems have been upgraded to meet modern requirements. Visitors will soon be able to linger in the newly created *Parkcafé* on the first floor. Welcome back to the Lower Belvedere!

According to artistic director Stella Rollig: *„Museums today score not only with first-rate programming, equally important is the visitor experience. The new Lower Belvedere boasts compelling exhibitions, a revitalized Baroque flair, and a brand-new café, making it a cultural destination of incredible appeal.“*

Wolfgang Bergmann, chief financial officer, adds: *„The coronavirus pandemic put many restrictions on the Belvedere, but it was also an opportunity to implement our building project to a much greater extent than would have been possible in the very short time frame initially planned. In that respect, we were able to invest in the future at the right time. The Lower Belvedere now sets a high international standard in terms of security, climate control, and visitor experience.“*

On 1 June 2020, the last exhibition before renovation at the Lower Belvedere came to an end: *Into the Night. Cabarets and Clubs in Modern Art* had already been severely impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. Belvedere management, therefore, developed a plan to use the crisis year 2021 for structural and infrastructural investments. This plan was made possible by a grant from the BMKÖS [Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport]: around

Contact
Belvedere Press
T +43 (01) 795 57-177
M press@belvedere.at
www.belvedere.at

seven million euros were allocated to refit the museum wing as well as the infrastructure of the Lower Belvedere.

An enhanced visitor experience: Visitors can now access the renovated museum from the Belvedere park and streetside from Rennweg via new barrier-free entrances located next to the Marble Hall. A freshly designed reception area covering 250 square meters, with a cash desk and a gift shop, welcomes Lower Belvedere guests. A tactile guidance system supports wayfinding. With the *Dalí-Freud* exhibition opening on 28 January 2022, Prince Eugene's intimate Privy Garden in front of the Orangery will again be accessible through the Marble Gallery.

The renovated exhibition wing will open to the public on 17 February with the presentation of *Viva Venezia!* **The new Parkcafé** will also launch at the same time, inviting visitors to top off their museum visit with a bite to eat. It is managed by the DON Group, which also manages the Schlosscafé at the Upper Belvedere and the Lucy Bar in the Belvedere 21.

A new fire prevention concept: The museum has transitioned from a system of technical and process fire protection to one of structural fire prevention. New fire barriers in the exhibition area provide better protection for exhibited art and the building; a new fire alarm system serves to protect both neighboring residents and the historic building itself. In addition, simplified escape routes have been laid out to ensure the safety of visitors.

Security measures for objects and exhibits have also been revised, resulting in a complete replacement of the systems in order to meet the highest international safety standards.

A new air conditioning system, reducing operating costs and CO2 emissions, will also improve the environmental footprint.

The first exhibition to open at the Orangery is *Dalí - Freud. An Obsession*. The exhibition runs through 29 May 2022 and depicts the influence of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's

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theories on Salvador Dalí's work. After more than a decade, Vienna will once again host a tribute to the famous Surrealist – this time telling the story of his relationship to both the city and to the founder of psychoanalysis.

On 7 February, the Medieval collection opens in the Palace Stables of the Lower Belvedere. This exhibit will be followed by *Viva Venezia! The Invention of Venice in the 19th Century* (17 February to 4 September 2022); *Joseph Rebell. In Southern Light* (15 June to 13 November 2022); and *GROW. The Tree in Art* (23 September 2022 to 8 January 2023). On 2 December 2022, the Belvedere will mark its 300th anniversary with an exhibition on its institutional history.

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