

## ART WORKS



**Albin Egger-Lienz**  
*Dance of Death from the Year 1809*, 1908  
Casein on canvas  
225 x 251 cm

The work of the East Tyrolean painter Albin Egger-Lienz is permeated with existential questions concerning life and death. *Dance of Death from the Year 1809*, a painting based on the 1809 war of liberation in Tyrol, was commissioned by the Modern Gallery, the predecessor institution of today's Belvedere. This patriotic subject matter had been stipulated by the Acquisitions Committee in preparation for the celebrations marking the sixty-year jubilee of Emperor Franz Joseph's coronation. But Egger-Lienz was still allowed artistic freedom. Instead of lauding the Tyrolean freedom fighters who, in loyalty to the emperor, rebelled against the Bavarian and Napoleonic troops, Egger-Lienz created a grim symbol of war: Four armed peasants are being led into battle by Death.



**Karl Huck, 1876**  
*Awakening (Eagles)*, 1908  
Oil on canvas  
186 x 352 cm

Giant birds – probably cinereous vultures that are falsely named eagles in the title – are perched in front of a mountain range, waiting for morning. This enigmatic work is by self-taught artist Karl Huck, who specialized in paintings of animals. The Hagenbund association of artists showed this painting in 1908 in a room honoring Emperor Franz Joseph to mark the sixty-year jubilee of his reign. Lions and birds of prey were among the Habsburgs' main heraldic animals.

Following the exhibition, the painting was acquired for the Modern Gallery at the Belvedere and Huck was recognized for the work at the Düsseldorf Art Exhibition. It was presented on many occasions until its popularity waned and it vanished into the stores. After extensive conservation treatments, it can now be seen for the first time since 1926.



**Max Oppenheimer**

***The Philharmonic*, 1926–52**

**Oil and tempera on canvas laid down on wood**

**Artothek des Bundes, on permanent loan to the Belvedere, Vienna**

**302 x 465 cm**

Developing on an earlier version, in 1926 Max Oppenheimer started working in Vienna on his life's masterpiece originally called *The Concert*. It was a painting of the orchestra conducted by Gustav Mahler. He combined both group and individual portraits and atmospherically translated the effects of music into painting. In 1938 Oppenheimer showed the triptych in Zurich. From there he had to flee to New York to escape Nazism. The wood panels followed him by ship in 1939 and thereafter were exhibited in America on many occasions, including at the San Francisco World's Fair. The artist repeatedly reworked the painting. It was his wish to show *The Philharmonic in Vienna*. In 1954, this return to Vienna was about to happen, but Oppenheimer died shortly before his departure. The work was bought by the Republic of Austria that same year.



**Hermann Nitsch**  
*Untitled, 1983*  
Acrylic on canvas  
Permanent loan from  
Galerie Christine König,  
Vienna  
212 x 585 cm

In the 1960s, the painter and Actionist Hermann Nitsch started working on his idea of the *Orgien-Mysterien-Theater* (Theater of Orgies and Mysteries). The concept combined drama, cult, music, and painting and aimed to explore one's own existence in a sensual, ritualistic, and provocative way. A fundamental part of the orchestration was the highly physical and gestural use of paint or animal blood, an approach Nitsch developed out of Viennese Actionism. This roughly six-meter-long work was created in summer 1983 as part of the *16th Action* at Prinzendorf Palace. Carefree, fresh, and spontaneous was how Nitsch described this action, which involved using his bare hands to apply buckets of blood-red paint on the canvas stretched across the wall.



**Unknown artist**  
*Saint Francis in Ecstasy, c. 1700*  
Oil on canvas  
252 x 160 cm

Originally attributed to Bartolomeo Altomonte, this painting was later believed to be a work by Filippo Lauri who was active in Rome during the High Baroque period. The latest technical investigations during the work's recent conservation suggest that at least three artists contributed to the painting during different periods. The most recent addition – the music-making angel and the two angel heads above the saint – seems only to have occurred in around 1800. X-rays and infrared reflectography have revealed

underdrawings that appear to indicate a scene from the life of John the Evangelist. Based on this discovery, it is now the task of art historians to research remaining questions about attribution and the original provenance of the work.



**Elisabeth Plank**  
*Framed Gloriosa*, 2011  
Acrylic on canvas  
179,5 x 260 cm

Since the start of her career in the 1980s, Elisabeth Plank has been exploring the possibilities of the painting process in her art. The gloriosa flowers

depicted in this work are not the point of departure for a narrative but a means of questioning the medium of painting itself with regard to color, form, structure, and space. In *Framed Gloriosa*, a recent acquisition by the Belvedere, the artist worked on the canvas from the front and the back, using both a paintbrush and an airbrush, and created space by deliberately leaving gaps. Between the flowers and forms reminiscent of garlands there opens for the viewer, in the words of the artist, "a dream-like intermediate reality for individual interpretations."



**Adolf Hirémy-Hirschl**  
*Souls at the River Acheron*, 1898  
Oil on canvas  
215 x 340 cm

The souls of the dead in human form have congregated on the banks of the Acheron.

Accompanied by Hermes Psychopompos, the conveyor of souls, they restlessly wait to cross to the underworld. Approaching on the river, the barge of the ferryman Charon can already be seen. Adolf Hirémy-Hirschl depicted this story from Greek mythology with searing emotional intensity. The realistic representation of the naked, pale, partially

veiled bodies is based on photographs. Despite the pathos of the composition, this heightens the nightmarish quality of the work. Following in the footsteps of Hans Makart, Hirémy-Hirschl emulated his grandiose "sensation pictures" while at the same time adhering here to the style of Dark Romanticism, the hallmarks of which are gloom, suffering, and death.



**Hubert Scheibl**

*Personal Mountains, 1997/98*

Oil on canvas

Gift of Thaddaeus Ropac

390 x 240 cm

Hubert Scheibl's works are vital, organic, and intuitive. His distinctive style means he occupies a key position within abstract painting in Austria. Scheibl's images are based on life's essential elements, such as time, light, mood, and memory. Looking at these paintings is like being enveloped in a mist of color that allows the gaze to slowly drift before one encounters

deeper and ever deeper layers. A painting on this scale requires the artist to be in absolute command of the medium: Which paint media achieve which effects? Which gestures are visualized in which ways? How is the pictorial space organized? Where should light and dark colors be applied?



**Jakob Gasteiger**  
*Untitled, 1996*  
Acrylic on canvas  
270 × 180 cm

Working on a large scale is not only a challenge in terms of artistic conception but also regarding available space, as Jakob Gasteiger recalls: "In 1996 I didn't have a studio but worked in a small apartment in an old building in Vienna. There I created this painting and four others of this size. The dimensions were calculated so the pictures could fit through the apartment door and the staircase. The first time I was able to see the finished paintings from a distance was at an exhibition in Kunstmuseum Bonn." Since the 1980s Gasteiger has explored the medium of painting using minimalist and conceptual approaches. Rejecting specific narratives and individual gestures, he concentrates on making artistic processes visible. The use of a paint comb gives his paintings their characteristic relief-like structure.



**Gunter Damisch**  
*Durchdringungsweltenwege, 1999–2000*  
Oil on canvas  
250 × 420 cm

Developing on the expressive painting style of the Neue Wilden from the 1980s, Gunter Damisch created a complex pictorial system with an unmistakable visual language of forms and colors. In his oeuvre of paintings, graphic art, and sculpture he created whole worlds and (micro)cosmoses and invented his own artistic vocabulary to name these. Concepts such as field, world, path, net, stream, flow, and flicker consistently recur in his art. The title of this over four-meter-long painting *Durchdringungsweltenwege* intertwines mental constructs such as "world" and "path" in a fabricated compound word. Depending on our

viewpoint we see greatly magnified microbes, flagellates, and tiny organisms or meandering rivers, settlements, and human figures in the far-off distance.



**Carl Moll**

***The Roman Ruins at Schönbrunn, 1892***

**Oil on canvas**

**322 x 242 cm**

This painting's subject will be familiar to walkers in Vienna. The artificial Roman ruins depicted in Carl Moll's work are located in the park at Schönbrunn Palace. Recent conservation of the picture required great patience and ingenuity. The frame first had to be removed for the painting to even fit through the door of the workshop. During the treatments the picture had to be gradually rotated on the easel for the conservator to be able to access every part. She spent two weeks removing the varnish – the protective top layer – with cotton swabs. But the true challenge was alternating between closeness and distance. In a work that places such a focus on detail it is particularly important to keep stepping back in order to view the painting as a whole.



**Emil Jakob Schindler**

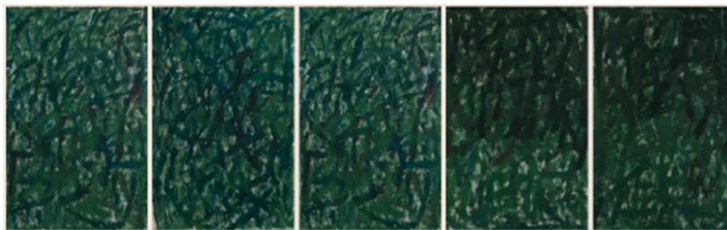
***Pax, 1891***

**Oil on canvas**

**207 x 271 cm**

Emil Jakob Schindler chose a monumental format for his allegory about the transience of things. Surrounded by steep rock faces we see a lonely cemetery. Ancient cypresses rise up against the overcast sky, the gravestones are overgrown with plants. Life and decay meet in this image. It is only on closer scrutiny that we see a monk lighting a candle in front of a

freshly dug grave. Schindler was inspired by the cemetery in Gravosa near Dubrovnik although the striking scene from nature and the majority of the architecture were imagined by the artist. In 1892 Schindler was awarded a gold medal at the Munich World's Fair for this Symbolist painting.



**Tamuna Sirbiladze**  
***Greenwall I-V, 2010***  
**Acrylic on canvas**  
**Loan from a private collection**  
**300 x 190 cm**

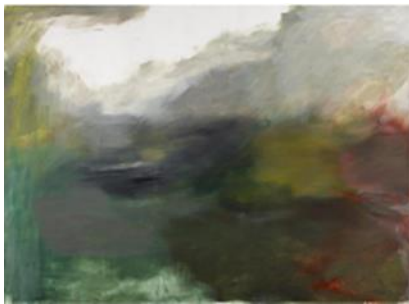
Inspired by floral frescoes at the Villa Medici in Rome, Georgian-Austrian artist Tamuna Sirbiladze painted this monumental five-part wall piece. Although early in her career she worked in a representational style on a small scale, in the years preceding her premature death she turned to large canvases. In the mid-1990s, Sirbiladze had moved from Tbilisi to Vienna where she studied with Franz Graf at the Academy of Fine Arts and met her future husband Franz West. In this new environment she developed an abstract, spontaneous style of painting and drawing. On loan to this exhibition, the work highlights the lack of large-scale paintings by women artists in the Belvedere's collection. In 2024 the Belvedere 21 will be dedicating a monographic exhibition to Tamuna Sirbiladze.



**Tina Blau**  
***Spring in the Prater, 1882***  
**Oil on canvas**  
**214 x 291 cm**

Tina Blau painted her monumental park landscape for the 1882 International Exhibition at the Vienna Künstlerhaus. According to an anecdote, the jury initially rejected the painting on the grounds that

its brightness "would tear a hole in the wall." It was only after the intervention of Hans Makart that the work was included in the exhibition. It brought overnight success for Tina Blau. In 1883 it was exhibited at the Paris Salon where it received an honorable mention. In order to capture the different atmospheres, light, and details of nature, Tina Blau pushed her handcart loaded with painting utensils through woods and meadows and painted outdoors. However, the vast scale of *Spring in the Prater* required her to work in her studio that was located in the midst of Vienna's Prater park. The painting was retrospectively described as the first Impressionist work in Austrian art.



**Herbert Brandl**  
***Untitled, 1997***  
Oil on canvas  
Gift from the Ploner Collection  
220 × 320 cm

"First, there is the total planning out, which takes weeks: I walk around the canvas, approach it. You have to also physically get a grip on such large canvases. You can't make an error on a single millimeter of such a canvas. Everything has to always add up, and when you stand directly in front of it, you don't have an overview of it all so easily, and at times it's truly exhausting. That's why I need a plan, which I often toss, however, the moment I approach the canvas. I have piles of printed photos in my studio, I look at them over and over again and think, I'll make that, that, and that, then I go, start on it, after having spent weeks imagining it, and then it turns out to be something completely different. That's a blend of total preparation and the willingness to scrap the preparation to enter into something uncontrolled."

Herbert Brandl, in Stella Rollig, Rolf H. Johannsen (eds.), *Herbert Brandl. Exposed to Painting*, Vienna 2020, p. 130



**Lorenz Adolf Schönberger**  
*The Gulf of Baiae at Sunset, 1804*  
Oil on canvas  
250 x 324 cm

A clear and tranquil view of the Gulf of Baiae to the west of Naples. The setting sun bathes the landscape in golden light. Although seemingly so natural, the scene's composition adheres to the conventions of the arcadian landscape typical around 1800. These were – often imagined – views of idealized nature. Such views were accompanied by classical architecture with people and animals as staffage introduced to enliven the scene. The Austrian landscape painter Lorenz Adolf Schönberger found his ideal nature in southern Italy. From towering trees to the overgrown ruins of an ancient temple of Venus and the medieval Castello Aragonese, he guides our gaze into the distance traversing several pictorial layers.



**Hans Makart**  
*Bacchus and Ariadne, 1873/74*  
Oil on canvas  
476 x 784 cm

Bacchus, the Greek god of wine, is shown wearing a crown of laurels and appears somewhat tipsy. His wife – the king's daughter Ariadne – leads the wedding party onward, her arm raised in a triumphant gesture. This enormous mythological wedding scene seems intoxicating and this is no coincidence. Hans Makart originally devised this over thirty-seven-square-meter painting as a stage curtain for the recently built Comic Opera in Vienna. However, as the surface was too reflective, it was never actually installed at the theater. The work has been in the Belvedere's collection since

1921 and when in storage it is rolled up due to its vast scale. Its display requires a large team as equal tension needs to be applied when stretching the work onto the frame.



**Hans Makart**  
*Hunt on the Nile, 1876*  
Oil on canvas  
275 x 456 cm

"It is a true heavenly delight to be able to smear around on such a large canvas; I will do my utmost not to paint anything small

again," Hans Makart wrote in the mid-1860s in a letter to his mother. But how did the painter go about tackling such a huge format? A structure in the artist's studio made it possible for him to lower the canvas into the cellar below and thus to reach areas that would otherwise have been inaccessible. Makart created this work in just three weeks for the 1876 exhibition of art and applied art in Munich. His earlier stay in Cairo had probably inspired him to paint *Hunt on the Nile*, an imagined exoticized scene from ancient Egypt. As in many of the artist's paintings, in this work he was again more interested in a fairy-tale fantasy than in historical reality.



**Hans Makart**  
*Venice Pays Homage to Caterina Cornaro, 1872/73*  
Oil on canvas  
400 x 1060 cm

From the mid-nineteenth century, the art market speculated with the appeal of monumental paintings. The aim was to use them to attract potential buyers to sales exhibitions. For several weeks in 1873, the Vienna World's Fair transformed the city into an artistic center of international standing. The gallerists Miethke and Wawra commissioned a history painting from Hans

Makart intending to display this at the rival exhibition to the official art show. The artist did not disappoint. He presented *Venice Pays Homage to Caterina Cornaro* – a symbolic depiction of the city's reverence toward the doge's daughter married to the king of Cyprus. The work is the epitome of the "sensation picture" – a virtuoso piece intended for a mass audience that was considered to have served its purpose if it became the talk of the town.