

belvedere

THE BELVEDERE AT A GLANCE

Upper Belvedere | Lower Belvedere | Orangery | Belvedere 21



Upper Belvedere, Northside
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BELVEDERE

The Belvedere in Vienna is one of the world's leading museums. Its famous art collection includes works from the Middle Ages to the present day. Austrian art is presented in an international context at three locations.

Built by the famous Baroque architect Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt in the early eighteenth century, the Palace Belvedere was originally the summer residence of Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736). It comprises two palaces—the Upper and Lower Belvedere—and their auxiliary buildings like the Orangery, all set in an historical garden. One of Europe's most stunning Baroque ensembles, it is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The construction of the Belvedere had been completed in 1723. Prince Eugene's imposing summer residence before the gates of Vienna can be seen as a symbol of the general's meteoric rise to power in the Habsburg Empire. After the prince died in 1736, his entire property passed to his niece Victoria who sold the Belvedere to the Habsburgs.

Its history as a museum dates back to the days of Maria Theresa and Joseph II when, in 1781, the **Upper Belvedere** became a gallery for the imperial collections and one of the world's first public museums. Today it houses the greatest collection of Austrian art dating from the Middle Ages to the present, complemented by the work of international artists. A selection of its masterpieces can be viewed in the permanent displays at the Upper Belvedere. Highlights include the **world's largest collection of paintings by Gustav Klimt** with the famous golden Jugendstil icons *The Kiss (Lovers)* and *Judith* as well as key works by Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka. Prominent examples of French Impressionism and the most important collection of Viennese Biedermeier art are further highlights of the permanent displays.

The impressive Upper Belvedere houses superb examples of Baroque interiors, for example the white Sala Terrena, the Grand Staircase, the Palace Chapel, and the historic Marble Hall. It was in this hall that the Austrian State Treaty was signed in 1955. Since 2018 the frescoed Carlone Hall has provided a setting for a series of interventions by contemporary artists under the title *Carlone Contemporary*.

Whereas the Upper Belvedere was intended for the purposes of pomp and display, the **Lower Belvedere** was originally Prince Eugene's residence. The Baroque Marble Hall, the Hall of Grottesques, and the Marble Gallery have all been preserved in their original condition while further rooms have been adapted and remodeled over time. The magnificent Gold Cabinet, for instance, dates from the era of Maria Theresa. In 1903, on the initiative of the Secessionists, the *Moderne Galerie* was opened in the Lower Belvedere with the aim of presenting the region's art in the context of international modernism. Some of the collection's key works were acquired during these early years, Klimt's *The Kiss (Lovers)* among them. Today innovative temporary exhibitions are staged at the Lower Belvedere and the former **Orangery**. It was originally a winter garden for orange trees with a heating system and sliding roof construction that were highly sophisticated for the time.

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In 2007 the architect Susanne Zottl designed a modern, white cube exhibition space in the building.

The Belvedere displays its medieval collections in the former **Palace Stables** – the building where Prince Eugene of Savoy once housed his horses. After the presentation was restructured and extensively adapted, the refurbished *Gallery Middle Ages and Renaissance* now displays treasures dating from the mid-fourteenth to the first half of the sixteenth century.

Located to the west of the Lower Belvedere is the **Kammergarten** or privy garden. This small, secluded park was originally Prince Eugene's private garden for the sole use of the prince and his closest companions. It can be accessed from the museum via the Marble Gallery.

The **park** between the Lower and Upper Belvedere is a gem of Baroque landscape design. Together with the two palaces it forms a harmonious whole, an ensemble listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the eighteenth century the park was primarily a stage for strolls, perambulation and conversation while also demonstrating the owner's power, wisdom, and wealth. On the south side of the Upper Belvedere is the so-called "Reflection Pond," mirroring and thus visually duplicating the façade. The palace park was designed by Dominique Girard, who had been the garden architect for the Elector of Bavaria.

BELVEDERE 21

Belvedere 21, formerly the 21er Haus, opened in 2011 as the third venue of the Belvedere. It is a venue for art of the present, performance, film, and music, and a meeting place within an emerging urban district. The program focuses on contemporary art produced in Austria and its international contextualization. Designed in 1958 by Karl Schwanzer as the Austrian Pavilion for the World Expo in Brussels, the building is regarded as one of the most significant examples of Austrian postwar Modernism. After being transferred to Vienna and adapted for museum use, it underwent extensive renovation beginning in 2007, based on plans by Adolf Krischanitz. In addition to its three exhibition levels, the building includes the Blickle Cinema, Vienna's only fully preserved cinema from the 1950s. Belvedere 21 also houses the Artothek des Bundes and the estate of sculptor Fritz Wotruba. The sculpture garden features works by internationally recognized artists and is open to the public free of charge.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Upper Belvedere

Prinz-Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Monday to Sunday 9 am to 6 pm

Lower Belvedere & Orangery

Rennweg 6, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Monday to Sunday 10 am to 6 pm

Palace Stables

Gallery Middle Ages and Renaissance
Rennweg 6, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Monday to Sunday 10 am to 6 pm

Belvedere 21

Arsenalstraße 1, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Tuesday to Sunday 11 am - 6 pm
Late Night: Thursday 11 am to 9 pm
Mondays only open on public holidays.

Contact

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