

Masterpieces in Focus
**RUELAND FRUEAUF THE ELDER
AND HIS CIRCLE**

Upper Belvedere
23 November 2017 until 11 March 2018



Rueland Frueauf the Elder, Portrait of the painter Jobst Seyfried, around 1495 Photo: Johannes Stoll, © Belvedere, Vienna

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This exhibition at the Upper Belvedere focuses on the works of the Late Gothic painter Rueland Frueauf the Elder and his workshop. It has been organized to display the panels from Frueauf's Salzburg altarpiece following the painstaking conservation work undertaken by the Belvedere. These works are at the heart of the exhibition about the generation of artists preceding Albrecht Dürer, who are so rarely placed in the spotlight.

Rueland Frueauf the Elder was probably born around 1440/50. He first lived and worked in Salzburg and later on, from the 1480s, in Passau, where he completed the painting of the town hall, taking over from the official city painter. Frueauf the Elder, who died in Passau in 1507, can be regarded as one of the greatest Late Gothic painters in the German-speaking area.

At the heart of the exhibition are eight altarpiece panels by the artist. These scenes from the Passion and the Life of the Virgin were painted in 1490/91, presumably for St. Peter's Church in Salzburg, and they are the starting point for questions of attribution concerning the many works associated with the Frueauf circle. A further masterpiece by the artist in the Belvedere's collection is the portrait of a man, whom recent discoveries in the archives have identified as the Passau-based painter Jobst Seyfrid. *"For this exhibition, we were able to bring together more works by the Frueauf group than have ever before been shown at one place. This opens up new perspectives on these extremely valuable paintings that have long preoccupied art history scholars and interested museum visitors,"* said Björn Blauensteiner, the curator of the exhibition.

Besides the oeuvre of Frueauf the Elder, the exhibition also presents a selection of works by artists from his circle. These include several examples by the Master of Großgmain that are striking for their exquisite painting technique. Thanks to generous loans from Klosterneuburg Monastery art collections, all of the known works by Frueauf's son, Rueland Frueauf the Younger, are also on display, including the famous *Legend of Saint Leopold*. This first juxtaposition of the younger Frueauf's oeuvre with his father's work means that both painters can be compared in detail and promises plenty of food for thought concerning questions surrounding the Frueauf circle. *"The combination of works by the Frueauf father and son offers Klosterneuburg Monastery the unique opportunity to re-evaluate major works from its own picture gallery and see them in a*

fresh light. I am delighted about this temporary 'family reunion' after over 500 years," said Wolfgang Christian Huber, custodian of the art collections at Klosterneuburg Monastery.

The Salzburg altarpiece panels showing scenes from the Passion and the Life of the Virgin are in the Belvedere's collection and have been painstakingly conserved in recent years. What was different about this project was that it was partially carried out as a public restoration at the Upper Belvedere and was thus made accessible to visitors. One particular challenge for the conservators was that the panels, originally painted on both sides, had been separated in the 1920s and 1930s. For a long time, this was common practice in order to be able to present both sides of the panels at the same time. However, the paintings were left very fragile as a result. A major aim of this conservation project was therefore to improve the stability of the paintings and secure the layers of paint. A further objective was to respectfully draw out the beauty of Rueland Frueauf the Elder's unique art. Stella Rollig, CEO of the Belvedere, said: *"The altarpiece panels by Rueland Frueauf the Elder are an example of the outstanding achievements of the Belvedere's Conservation Department. The exhibition is the output of years of meticulous work – almost detective work – that has safeguarded the future existence of these masterpieces from the Late Gothic period."*

In addition to the eight paintings from the Salzburg altarpiece, many other works from the Frueauf group were examined in preparation for the exhibition. The underdrawings hidden beneath layers of paint were brought to light using infrared reflectography, revealing original ideas that had actually been abandoned centuries ago. These paintings were also examined using X-rays and pigment analysis, ultraviolet light, raking light, and also under the microscope. The results are presented in the exhibition and published in the accompanying catalogue, the first monograph about Rueland Frueauf the Elder for over seventy years.

The exhibition is curated by Björn Blauensteiner and has been organized in collaboration with Klosterneuburg Monastery.

Exhibitions in the series *Masterpieces in Focus* are made possible by the generous support of the Dorotheum.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue.

Please contact us, if you want us to send a PDF of the exhibition catalogue: presse@belvedere.at
Complimentary images can be downloaded for press purposes at www.belvedere.at/press.

#Frueauf

ARTISTS in the exhibition

Rueland Frueauf the Elder

Rueland Frueauf the Younger

The Master of Großmain

Masterpieces in Focus

In line with the main tasks and strengths of a museum – conserving, presenting, and expanding the collection, as well as communicating and educating – the exhibition series Masterpieces in Focus has been part of the Belvedere's programme since 2009. Twice a year it places a focus on important aspects in Austrian art history, concentrating on a key theme, a particular artist or outstanding masterpieces from the collection. These presentations are integrated in the Upper Belvedere's permanent displays, but stand out within the exhibition design. They focus on the significance of selected works in the context of the collection, relating them to the art and culture of their time. The exhibitions are accompanied by a book series that publish the latest research and, adopting a multidisciplinary approach, present the artworks from an unusual perspective.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title	Rueland Frueauf the Elder and his Circle
Exhibition Dates	23 November 2017 until 11 March 2018
Venue	Upper Belvedere
Exhibits	36
Curator	Björn Blauensteiner
Catalogue	<i>Rueland Frueauf d. Ä. und sein Kreis</i> <i>German Version</i> Editors: Stella Rollig, Björn Blauensteiner, Authors: Björn Blauensteiner, Michaela Frick, Brigitte Futscher, Michael Grall, Wolfgang Christian Huber, Stefanie Jahn, Renate Kohn, Matthew Reeves, Stella Rollig, Lothar Schultes; Graphic Design: grafisches Büro, Vienna Printing: Grasl FairPrint, Bad Vöslau Published by Hirmer Verlag GmbH, Munich; 216 pages + 4 fold-out pages, 22 x 28 cm; hardcover with jacket; German Version ISBN 978-3-903114-47-0; EUR 34
Contact	Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-0 www.belvedere.at
Opening Hours	Daily 9am to 6pm
Regular Tickets	€ 15 (Upper Belvedere)
Public Relations	Press Belvedere Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-177 M press@belvedere.at Complimentary images can be downloaded for media coverage of the exhibition at www.belvedere.at/press

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