

MARIA THERESA AND THE ARTS

Lower Belvedere
30 June to 5 November 2017



Daniel Schmidely, Maria Theresa in Hungarian Coronationdress, 1742
© Galéria mesta Bratislavy
Oil on canvas. 237.5 x 157 cm

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The Belvedere has seized Maria Theresa's 300th birthday as an occasion to elucidate her relationship to the visual arts. For the exhibition, curator Georg Lechner has brought to light a number of exciting details. For example, Maria Theresa was extremely open-minded and unbiased in her approach to art. Comprising some 120 works, the show traces the impact of the Austrian sovereign's cultural commitment on posterity.

Divided into six sections, the exhibition examines Maria Theresa's approach to the visual arts. The empress was well aware of her official responsibilities as the country's figurehead. As a tight budget only allowed her to acquire works by old masters to a limited extent, Maria Theresa concentrated above all on contemporary artists of all genres and disciplines. She had the courage to opt for unconventional solutions and an extremely progressive understanding of art. The monarch's acquisition policy has left an ever-lasting imprint on parts of the Belvedere's collections.

*"In order to get visitors into the right mood for the period, the first section of our exhibition will present outstanding examples of **portraiture**, a genre that saw a veritable boom in Maria Theresa's days. Martin van Meytens the Younger, who probably best suited the imperial household's taste, was one of her favourite portraitists,"* says curator Georg Lechner. Besides a number of other artists, the empress also greatly appreciated the work of Jean-Etienne Liotard.

A further chapter of the show deals with the **sculptor Balthasar Ferdinand Moll**, who also ranked among the empress's favourites and whom she entrusted with numerous commissions. His masterpiece is the **double sarcophagus** for the monarch and her husband, Francis Stephen, which is still installed in the Imperial Crypt. Duplicates of the side reliefs featuring scenes from the imperial couple's life are on display in the exhibition.

Wilhelm Beyer had been a model master at the Ludwigsburg porcelain factory before the imperial household commissioned him with the sculptural decoration of Schönbrunn's palace gardens in 1773. In order to complete the large-scale project, which comprised thirty-six statues, in time, as many as sixteen assistants were engaged, all of whom became influential figures in the field of sculpture. A further section of the exhibition is therefore devoted to Beyer and his circle.

Another chapter is exclusively devoted to **Maria Theresa's relationship to the Belvedere**. The monarch purchased the building complex and the palace gardens from Princess Victoria, Prince Eugene of Savoy's niece, in 1752, but took her time to assign a particular purpose to the place. *"It had been Maria Theresa's decision together with her son Joseph II. to **move the***

*imperial collection from the Imperial Stables to Prince Eugene's former official residence. In 1777 she made the Belvedere accessible for all citizens as an **educational institution and museum**. The paintings presented in our exhibition were already part of the collection then,"* Stella Rollig, Director-General of the Belvedere, points out.

A further section focuses on **landscape painting** in general and on **Johann Christian Brand** in particular. Appointed chamber painter in 1765 and later holding a chair at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, the artist developed into the period's leading landscapist. Maria Theresa commissioned from him the compositions *Heron-Hawking in Laxenburg* and *The Battle of Hochkirch* as part of the decoration of her imperial residences. Both paintings are now preserved at the Belvedere.

Last but not least, a chapter of its own deals with preliminary designs for **ceiling frescoes and allegories**. A characteristic feature of the Habsburg Empire under Maria Theresa, they served to glorify the imperial dynasty. The exhibition presents oil sketches by **Franz Anton Maulbertsch, Gregorio Guglielmi, Daniel Gran**, and many others. Some of their monumental realisations have survived and invite visitors to go on a discovery tour of Vienna and its surroundings following in Maria Theresa's footsteps.

Different from familiar historical portrayals, *Maria Theresa and the Arts* highlights new aspects of the famous Habsburg empress's personality.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue.

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ARTISTS in the exhibition

Karl Josef Aigen
 Martino Altomonte
 Johann Gottfried Auerbach
 Antonio Bencini
 Wilhelm Beyer
 Gabrielle Beyer (geb. Bertrand)
 Frans van der Borgh
 Christian Hilfgott Brand
 Johann Christian Brand
 Anton Matthias Josef Domanek
 (Domanöck)
 Johann Georg Dorfmeister
 Johann Martin Fischer
 Vinzenz Fischer
 Friedrich Heinrich Füger
 Daniel Gran
 Gregorio Guglielmi
 Johann Baptist Hagenauer
 Philipp Ferdinand de Hamilton
 Peter van den Hecke
 C. Hirsch d.J.
 Franz Christoph Janneck
 Salomon Kleiner

Martin Knoller
 Johann Kupetzky
 Jean-Étienne Liotard
 Ádám Mányoki
 Franz Anton Maulbertsch
 Franz Messmer
 Franz Xaver Messerschmidt
 Martin van Meytens d.J.
 Joseph Ignaz Mildorfer
 Balthasar Ferdinand Moll
 Jakob Gabriel Mollinarolo
 Franz Anton Palko
 Jean-Baptiste Pillement
 Leonhard Posch
 Philipp Jakob Prokop
 Maximilian Joseph Schinnagl
 Daniel Schmidely
 Jakob Matthias Schmutzer
 Christian Seybold
 Franz Xaver Wagenschön
 Joseph Winterhalder d.J.
 Franz Zächerle
 Franz Anton Zauner

BIOGRAPHY MARIA THERESA

- 1717 Birth of Maria Theresa, daughter of Emperor Charles VI and Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel on May 13.
- 1736 Marriage of Maria Theresa to Francis Stephen of Lorraine on February 12.
- 1741 Coronation of Maria Theresa as “King” of Hungary in Pressburg (Bratislava) on June 25.
- 1743 Coronation of Maria Theresa as “King” of Bohemia on May 12.
- 1745 Francis Stephen of Lorraine is crowned Francis I, Holy Roman Emperor, in Frankfurt.
- 1765 Death of Francis Stephen I in Innsbruck. Joseph becomes emperor and co-ruler; Leopold becomes Grand Duke of Tuscany.
- 1776 Work begins on transferring the Imperial Picture Gallery from the Stallburg to the Upper Belvedere.
- 1778 Beginning of the War of the Bavarian Succession, following the extinction of the junior line of the Wittelsbach dynasty with the death of Maximilian III of Bavaria in December 1777.
- 1780 Death of Maria Theresa on November 29, preceded by the death of her brother-in-law, Charles Alexander of Lorraine, on July 4.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	MARIA THERESA AND THE ARTS
Exhibition duration	30 June to 5 November 2017
Venue	Lower Belvedere
Exhibits	Around 120
Curator	Georg Lechner
Catalogue	<i>Maria Theresa and the Arts</i> Editors: Stella Rollig, Georg Lechner 232 p., 215 x 280 mm, Hardcover English Version, ISBN 978-3-903114-39-5 € 34,-
Contact	Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 (01) 795 57-0 www.belvedere.at
Opening hours	Daily 10 am to 6 pm, From 1 July 2017: Friday 10 am to 9 pm
Regular Entry	€ 13,- (Lower Belvedere)
Guided Tours	T +43 (01) 795 57-134, M public@belvedere.at
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