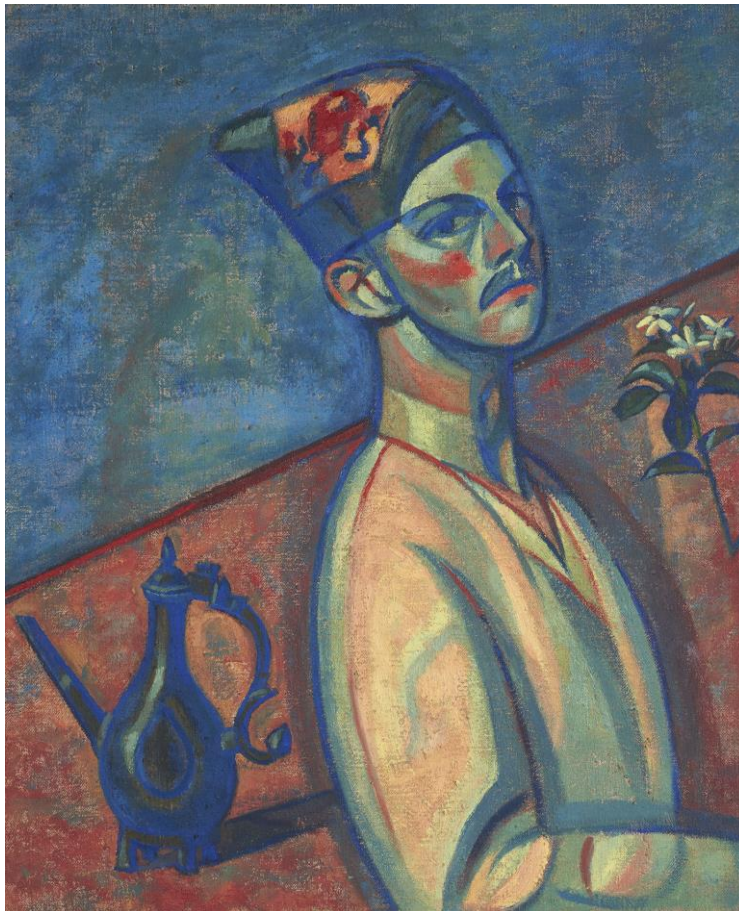


**Masterpieces in Focus:
ALFRED WICKENBURG
Visions in Colour and Form**

Upper Belvedere
17 March to 16 July 2017



Alfred Wickenburg
Self-portrait in persian dress, 1920
Oil on canvas, 81 x 67 cm
LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz, Photo: Reinhard Haider

MASTERPIECES IN FOCUS ALFRED WICKENBURG

Visions in Colour and Form

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From 17 March to 16 July 2017, a selection of works by the Styrian painter Alfred Wickenburg will be on view at the Belvedere within the framework of the museum's exhibition series *Masterpieces in Focus*. Curator Kerstin Jesse will be presenting some fifty works executed between the 1920s and the 1930s to the artist's late period, which particularly stands out for its brilliant colours. In addition, the exhibition will introduce the artist's designs for stained glass windows. The *Focus* show will be complemented by the most recent findings gained during the scholarly exploration of Wickenburg's extensive *œuvre*.

"This exhibition is a successful example of how the scholarly exploration of an artist's *œuvre* and the activities of a museum's exhibition department have come to interlock most felicitously. Since 2014, intensive research has been conducted into Wickenburg's complete works. The findings gained to date are now to enrich this impressive *Focus* show. The catalogue raisonné is scheduled to be completed in 2018," says Director-General Stella Rollig of the Belvedere.

Alfred Wickenburg (1885–1978) was born into an aristocratic Styrian family and soon decided to pursue an independent artist's career. At the age of nineteen, he went to Munich, then a hotspot on the art scene, to attend Anton Azbe's painting school, which at the time enjoyed the reputation of being a liberal institution. Wickenburg thus decided against a traditional education at the Vienna or Munich art academy, choosing a way that would prove beneficial for his personal artistic evolution. In no time he discovered for himself the creative principles of colour, form, line, and flatness.

"Alfred Wickenburg's work was characterised by a bold use of generous forms and powerful colours at an early date. Moreover, the artist did not shy away from tackling large formats," curator Kerstin Jesse points out. Individual works from his early years illustrate how Wickenburg reflected upon the numerous isms of the twentieth century and developed them further through his continuous preoccupation with problems of colour and form. "In this, he always remained true to his personal style and even in the case of commissioned works refused to settle for a compromise," the curator adds.

In 1905 the artist went to Dachau to join his **mentor Adolf Hölzel**, who can be considered a forerunner of non-objective painting and was an important teacher for Wickenburg in his **analytic approach to line, colour, and form**.

Between 1906 and 1909, Wickenburg studied at the renowned **Académie Julian in Paris**, which before him had been frequented by such personalities as Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Fernand Leger, and František Kupka. During his time in Paris, Wickenburg encountered the work of the **Fauves**, which was marked by a resourceful employment of colour as an expression of emotion. The motif was considered secondary to colour and overall form, both of which were regarded as essential elements of a work of art that primarily aims to create an **experience of the senses**. The impact of the Fauves in general and of the works of Matisse in particular becomes noticeable in the **vivid palette** of Wickenburg's **late period** from the 1950s onwards.

Wickenburg completed his training in Stuttgart, where he attended the master class of his **mentor Adolf Hölzel**.

Incentives from Italy

It was particularly during his study trips to Venice, Rome, and Florence that Wickenburg received further incentives for his artistic development. In Italy, the artist explored the art of antiquity and the Renaissance and intensively dealt with the **formal languages of Cubism and Futurism**. Through the works of **Giorgio De Chirico and Carlo Carrà**, he familiarised himself with **Metaphysical Painting**, characterised by stage-like settings and an arrangement of unrelated pictorial elements.

Late Work and Significance

An increasing **reduction to the essentials** of the motifs depicted and a balanced interplay of line, form, and colour were the principal ingredients of Wickenburg's art. For many years, the artist worked as a drawing teacher at the Federal School of Arts and Crafts in Graz, where he also headed the department of fresco painting.

The exhibition at the Belvedere also looks into Wickenburg's **continuous development of one and the same motif within a series**. For example, the multiple versions of the painting *Burgenland Still Life* illustrate that the artist sought to achieve a gradual intensification of expression.

Starting in the 1960s, the artist concentrated on conceiving designs for **stained glass windows**. A workshop replica of a glass window and its preliminary design are on display in the exhibition.

In her contribution to the **catalogue**, art historian Lucia Beck, who is in charge of the compilation of the catalogue raisonné, deals with Wickenburg's designs for stained glass windows for public spaces and sacred buildings. Further contributions investigate the artist's training (Kerstin Jesse) and his relationship to Adolf Hölzel (Alexander Klee). The publication also contains a detailed biography of the artist.

Wickenburg, a **co-founder of the Graz Secession (1923)** and a member of the Vienna Secession (from 1945 onwards), continued working as an artist until the ripe old age of ninety-three years. His long career, in the course of which he regularly exhibited in Austria and abroad, such as at the Venice Biennale of 1934, 1936, 1950, and 1958, brought the artist numerous prizes and honours.

Thanks to the commitment of the artist's family, above all that of Henriette Gorton-Wickenburg, it was possible to initiate the compilation of an extensive catalogue raisonné at the Belvedere Research Centre in 2014. The catalogue of the paintings is already accessible online at <http://werkverzeichnisse.belvedere.at> and will be completed by 2018.

Exhibitions within the series Masterpieces in Focus are made possible through the generous support of the Dorotheum.

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.

Press texts and images can be downloaded at the following link:
www.belvedere.at/presse

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Alfred Wickenburg

Alfred Wickenburg (born July 26, 1885 in Bad Gleichenberg; † 25 December 1978 in Graz) was an Austrian painter and graphic artist.

Alfred Constantine Capello Matthias Count von Wickenburg came from a Styrian noble family. He studied in Munich at the Azbéschule 1904-05, then 1906-09 with Jean Paul Laurens at the Académie Julian in Paris and Stuttgart in 1910-14 in the painting class at the Academy Landenberger and in the composition class at Adolf Hoelzel.

From 1918 Wickenburg was a freelance artist. He spent 1920-23 with studies in Italy.

From 1923 Wickenburg lived in Graz, where he founded together with Wilhelm Thöny and other secessionist Grazer, whose vice president and later honorary president he was.

After hostilities in the early 1930ies he established himself finally as a leading figure of modernism in Styria.

From 1934-36 he was professor of landscape and still life painting at the National Art School in Graz, from 1936 professor of landscape painting and drawing at the Fresco School in Graz.

In 1936 he took part in the Biennale in Venice in 1937 at the World Exhibition in Paris.

From 1945 Wickenburg was a member of the Vienna Secession.

During the Nazi period, he has adapted his style to the zeitgeist, but personal life painted in the style of modernism.

After the war he played an increasing role in the official art policy of the Second Republic.

In 1951 he was a member of the jury for the Austrian State Prize, 1952 Delegate of Austria to UNESCO in Venice.

He was advisor to the State of Styria at the Federal Ministry of Education in Vienna and was awarded the 1956 Grand Austrian State Prize for Visual Arts.

In 1957 he was appointed to the Austrian Art Senate and won the British Composer Award.

Finally, he was honored in 1969 with the Austrian Medal for Science and Art.

Wickenburg was next to Alfred Wilhelm Thöny the most important representative of the Styrian Modern.

He reflected on various modern art movements, especially Cubism, Futurism and the Pittura metafisica.

Typical of him is his specific kind of Cubism, the simplification and harmony of form and color vision aspired and transferred into memorable characters.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title	Masterpieces in Focus Alfred Wickenburg – Visions in Colour and Form
Exhibition Dates	17 March to 16 July 2017
Venue	Upper Belvedere
Exhibits	51 (20 works from the Belvedere's collection, 31 loans)
Curator	Kerstin Jesse
Catalogue	Meisterwerke im Fokus: Alfred Wickenburg Editors: Stella Rollig, Kerstin Jesse Inhouse Publishing, 176 p., 19 x 24.5 cm German version ISBN: 978-3-903114-31-9 € 21,-
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
Regular Tickets	€ 14 (Upper Belvedere)
Guided Tours	T +43 (01) 795 57-134, M public@belvedere.at
Public Relations	Belvedere & Winter Palace Public Relations Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 (01) 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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