

MARCH AT THE PALACE (1–31 March 2023) – Temporary Exhibition

CAST FOR ETERNITY

The Bronzes of the Princes of Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein Garden Palace, Fürstengasse 1, 1090 Vienna

Daily between 11 am and 7 pm, free admission

The fascination of bronze: to this day, works of art in this alloy number among the greatest artistic achievements in the history of humankind. The Princely Collections hold some of the most precious bronze sculptures from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, works that will be on view in the temporary, free-admission exhibition CAST FOR ETERNITY from 1–31 March 2023. Unique examples such as the “Bust of Marcus Aurelius” by Antico, Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi’s “Anima Dannata” or the magical, monumental “Bust of Ferdinando I de’ Medici” by Pietro Tacca will be complemented by major loans from other internationally important bronze collections, including the “Eagle Lectern” from the cathedral at Hildesheim, and Leonardo da Vinci’s “Equestrian Statuette”.

Featuring key masterpieces of bronze sculpture, the temporary exhibition allows unusual insights into the artistic possibilities afforded by this material: from antiquity onwards, the sheen of bronze was intended to secure the eternal fame of the person depicted; technical developments in the Renaissance then broadened the spectrum with strikingly realistic representations of physical movement and emotional intensity.

The first document of princely collecting activity in this field is the larger than life-sized bronze of “Christ in Distress” commissioned by Prince Karl I from Adrian de Fries in 1607. Successive generations of the family seamlessly continued the practice of acquisition and collecting as an enduring demonstration of the importance of this princely dynasty.

A special feature of the princely collection of bronzes are the copies of Roman antiquities and contemporaneous works of art. Originals in marble were the preserve of popes and the Roman high nobility, while bronze casts represented an appropriate medium for collectors. Prince Johann Adam Andreas I duly commissioned copies of Roman antiquities owned by the Medici family from Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi. The exhibition includes his copy of Michelangelo’s “Bacchus” and his bronze casts of the “Anima Beata” and the “Anima Dannata” after originals by Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

The current Reigning Prince, Hans-Adam II, has also made spectacular new acquisitions, developing the collection of bronzes with its history to the present day into one of the most renowned in the world. A highlight of the collection of Renaissance bronzes acquired by the prince is the “Bust of Marcus Aurelius” by Antico, its size and overall fire-gilding giving it an impressive presence.

In 2004 Prince Hans-Adam II also acquired one of the most thrilling examples of the use of precious materials: the “Badminton Cabinet”, crowned by heavily fire-gilt allegories of the “Four Seasons” after designs by Girolamo Ticciati. These bronzes are among the last great examples of the Florentine tradition of bronze sculpture and will be presented in the exhibition as discrete works of art for the first time.

On view for the first time will be the latest major acquisition to join the Princely Collections: the magical, monumental “Bust of Ferdinando I de’ Medici” by Pietro Tacca, who after the death of Giambologna was able to make use of the latter’s wax model. In a rare feat of subtle and impressive virtuosity, the bust captures the ambivalent character of one of the great potentates of the Renaissance.

Significant loans from the most important international collections of bronzes complement the exhibition, including the “Eagle Lectern” dating to 1230/40 from the cathedral at Hildesheim, a work that is emblematic of the superb craftsmanship of medieval foundry work, and Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mounted Warrior” from the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest, one of the small number of sculptural works that allow us an impression of the artist as sculptor.

MARCH AT THE PALACE

In 2022 the series MARCH AT THE PALACE was launched with resounding success when the museum welcomed around 24,000 visitors to its temporary exhibition “THE CONSTANT PRINCE – Joseph Wenzel and His Art”. Each year from 1 to 31 March within the context of MARCH AT THE PALACE a temporary exhibition focuses on subjects ranging from princely personalities, the history of princely collecting, new acquisitions and selected aspects of the Collections to new perspectives on the artistic contexts of the holdings. Admission to the exhibition is free of charge.

GUIDED TOURS OF THE TEMPORARY EXHIBITION & PERMANENT COLLECTION

During MARCH AT THE PALACE additional guided tours of the temporary exhibition and the permanent exhibition of the Princely Collections on the first floor will be offered at a reduced rate: € 15 (single ticket; additional reduction for Ö1 Club members) or € 39 (family ticket: 2 adults and 2 children aged between 12 and 18). Registration by phone or via website recommended. For further information on the temporary exhibition and bookings visit www.palaisliechtenstein.com

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