



**LEOPOLD
MUSEUM**

EN

Friedrich von Amerling, Portrait of a Girl (detail), 1839, Leopold Museum, Vienna, Photo: Leopold Museum, Vienna

10TH APRIL – 27TH JULY 2025

BIEDERMEIER

**THE RISE
OF AN ERA**

PRESS RELEASE

BIEDERMEIER

THE RISE OF AN ERA

10TH APRIL–27TH JULY 2025 | LEVEL -2



JAKOB ALT
Balloon Ride over Vienna
(View of Vienna from the Southwest
with a Balloon over the City), 1847
Wien Museum, Photo: Wien Museum

The Leopold Museum is dedicating a large-scale spring exhibition to the fascinating era of the Biedermeier, which lasted from the Congress of Vienna in 1814/15 to the bourgeois revolutions of 1848. The presentation features around 190 works by more than 70 artists, including paintings, watercolors and drawings, as well as furnishings, glass, porcelain, dresses, and much more. Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Europe was shaped by massive political and social upheaval, which profoundly changed society. The exhibition *Biedermeier. The Rise of an Era* focuses not only on Vienna as the capital and residential city of the Habsburg Empire but also on the magnificent centers of the crown lands, including Budapest, Prague, Ljubljana, Venice

and Milan, and their environs. Rather than concentrating only on the Viennese masters, such as Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller and Friedrich von Amerling, the presentation also shines the spotlight on eminent artists from the various parts of the Danube Monarchy, among them painters like the Hungarian Miklós Barabás, the Czech Antonín Machek, the Venetian Francesco Hayez or the artist active in Trieste, Jožef Tominc (Giuseppe Tominz).



FRANZ EYBL
Girl, Reading, 1850
Belvedere, Vienna, Photo: Belvedere Wien

“Between 1855 and 1857, the fictional character ‘Weiland Gottlieb Biedermaier’, created by Adolf Kußmaul and Ludwig Eichrodt, appeared in the satirical weekly magazine *Fliegende Blätter*. Their figure was a poet who had recently died in a Swabian village, in whose name they wrote parodistic poems. This character would give his name to an era, relating primarily to Austria and Germany, which took place between 1815 and 1848, and was one of the most important periods in the development of Austrian art. The exhibition *Biedermeier – An Era in Flux* focuses on Austria with the territorial borders of the time, thus offering a much more varied and interesting picture.”

Johann Kräfner, curator of the exhibition

The Biedermeier era was one of the most important periods in the development of Austrian art, which also had a significant influence on the remainder of the 19th and the early 20th century. The impact the era had on Modernism should not be underestimated – for instance on the free and applied arts, on architecture and literature, but also on social structures. Esthetic principles, such as simplicity, functionality and a clear design vocabulary in architecture and interior design, shaped the oeuvres of Adolf Loos (1870–1933) and Josef Hoffmann (1870–1956). The Biedermeier era also has an interesting connection to the 21st century:



FRANCESCO HAYEZ
Portrait of the Singer
Matilde Juva Branca, 1851
 Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan
 Photo: Comune di Milano – all rights reserved –
 Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan

“The topicality of this exhibition – which goes back more than 200 years – resides in the recent emergence and increasing prevalence of the concept of neo-Biedermeier, for instance in philosophy and sociology. While the reasons for a retreat into the private domain have changed, our time evokes similar sentiments prompting a nostalgic withdrawal into the home and a lack of interest in democratic structures as a cultural phenomenon. Today, this is caused by fears of globalization, wars and migration movements, and the loss of one's personal life in a digital world increasingly controlled and monitored by robotics and the algorithms of artificial intelligence.”

Hans-Peter Wipplinger, Director of the Leopold Museum

RETREAT INTO THE PRIVATE SPHERE, URBAN SOCIETY AND RURAL IDYLLS

The Congress of Vienna resulted in a strengthening of absolutism and the suppression of democratic aspirations. People avoided political activities for fear of reprisals, and retreated into the private sphere. Themes such as a longing for security and harmony in everyday family life entered the pictorial worlds of Biedermeier artists. Despite widespread severe poverty, the simultaneous economic upturn yielded a confident bourgeoisie, whose proud members wanted to be portrayed by painters. These portraits offered insights into the predominantly urban society's values and aspirations towards finding their own identity. As a sort of counter draft, artists also focused on bucolic idylls and the modest life of the rural population. Artists and scientists explored the Austrian Alps as well as far-flung countries and cities, thus satisfying a longing for the new and unknown, and a novel interest in foreign cultures.



ANGELO INGANNI
View Towards Milan Cathedral Square
with the Coperto dei Figini, 1838
 Milano, Palazzo Morando | Costume Moda
 Immagine, Photo: Comune di Milano – Tutti i diritti
 riservati – Palazzo Morando | Costume Moda
 Immagine, Milano (in deposito dall'Archivio
 Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milano)

VIENNA AND THE CAPITALS OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE

The exhibition starts with the urban developments in Vienna and other major cities of the Habsburg Monarchy. While the capital and residential city Vienna was the center, the capitals of the crown lands and of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia gained increasing importance during the Biedermeier era. In the first half of the 19th century, Vienna was very limited in terms of expansion owing to the walls around its city center, a situation that only changed with the decision to de-fortify the city in 1857. However, a movement of renewal had set in already during the Biedermeier period: existing streets were extended and new ones built, medieval houses were converted into bourgeois tenement buildings, while manufactories, hotels, dance halls and public swimming pools were among the new structures that enlivened and modernized Vienna. In Budapest, entire squares and streets along the Danube were newly aligned with tenement buildings and splendid palaces of the Hungarian nobility. The metropolises of Northern Italy, too, derived important impulses under the Austrian administration, with the construction of modern theaters, concert halls, museums, coffee houses, schools, factories and cemeteries.

INNOVATIONS AND INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS

Aside from all the political friction, the era was also a period of great innovations and es-
 thetical changes. These impetuses were not only derived from Vienna. The exhibition paints a diverse picture of the era, and shines the spotlight on the eminent artistic and cultural developments in centers like the Hungarian capital Budapest, the Bohemian metropolis Prague, the Slovenian Ljubljana, the important port cities Trieste and Venice, and the Italian economic capital Milan. Since the invention of the steam engine (1769) and the foundation of the world's first industrial cotton spinning factory in England, industrial developments

snowballed. Austria, too, was caught up in the rapid industrial progress, which became the mainspring of commercial life. Textile factories emerged, the first railway lines were built, and spectacular suspension bridges were constructed, including the one that connected Buda and Pest, the two name-giving parts of the Hungarian capital, for the first time. Smoking chimneys soon dominated urban and industrial landscapes, which artists proudly captured in vedute without being aware of their impact on the environment.



MATTHÄUS LODER
The Ankogel near Bad Gastein, 1827
 Private Collection – Erzherzog Johann Collection
 Photo: Sammlung Erzherzog Johann

BIEDERMEIER LANDSCAPES

The painters of the Biedermeier era increasingly moved away from the notion of an ideal landscape. Their trips to the Salzkammergut region and the pre-Alps close to Vienna yielded realistic and detailed renderings of nature. Along with precise drawings and atmospheric engravings and etchings, the new and inexpensive printing technique of lithography enabled artists to reach a wide range of buyers. Artists also accompanied members of the high nobility on their explorations of the Austrian mountains. The artists' work process was determined by creating sketches during their travels and executing the works back home in the studio. With painters like Friedrich Gauermann, the landscape entered into a symbiosis with the depicted figures, showing people living with nature and fighting its whims.



HUBERT SATTLER
Cosmorama: The Colossi of Memnon in the Nile Valley (Egypt), 1846
 Salzburg Museum, Photo: Salzburg Museum

CURIOSITY ABOUT THE FOREIGN AND LOOKING FURTHER AFIELD

During the Biedermeier period, trade flourished once more. Vienna, Budapest and Trieste became points of departure for trade with the Middle East, while luxury goods were imported from Alexandria and Damascus. Lombardy, a center for the production of raw silk, supplied businesses in Vienna, where the street name Seidengasse ["silk lane"] still recalls the flourishing manufactories of the time. Scientific interests took artists to far-flung destinations: Thomas Ender accompanied an expedition, ordered by Emperor Franz I, undertaken by 13 natural scientists from Trieste to Brazil. Hubert Sattler traveled the world and created large-format vedute of Constantinople, Cairo, New York and many other places, which he subsequently exhibited in Europe and overseas.



LEOPOLD STÖBER
The Young Artist with His Family, 1827
 LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections,
 Vaduz–Vienna, Photo: LIECHTENSTEIN.
 The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna

BIEDERMEIER INTERIORS AND FASHION

In the watercolors of Rudolf von Alt and Thomas Ender, interior depictions evolved into independent artistic genres. The items of furniture, which were mostly placed along the walls, accommodated the idea of customizable use, while the representational aspect took a back seat. The rooms were adorned with exciting wallpaper patterns produced in Austria, which were then decorated with engravings, watercolors and oil paintings that were often hung in several rows one above the other. Interior design and furnishings were dominated by a new canon of simplicity, which was appreciated both by the bourgeoisie and the nobility, and which led to a rediscovery of the Biedermeier in the early 20th century by architects including Adolf Loos and Josef Hoffmann. Representations in paintings and graphic works, meanwhile, afford wonderful impressions of the imaginative Biedermeier fashion. There are also rare examples of original garments that have survived from the period. After 1820, the ladies of the Biedermeier preferred frills and taffeta, bold colors, as well as corsets and crinolines. Owing to the artificial wasp waists and huge skirts, women sometimes looked like living porcelain figures.



PETER FENDI
**Gathering of the Austrian Imperial
 Family in the Autumn of 1834, 1835**
 Artstetten Castle, Photo: Atelier Kräftner

THE MASTERS OF PORTRAIT ART

In portrait painting, the ideal image was increasingly replaced by likenesses that were as realistic as possible – at times resulting in portraits with almost caricature-like traits. The artists in Budapest, Prague and Lombardy-Venetia were in no way inferior to the Viennese masters of portrait art, such as Waldmüller, Amerling, Johann Baptist Reiter and Franz Eybl. Particularly eminent are the portraits created by the Slovenian-Italian artist Jožef Tominc (Giuseppe Tominz), who excelled in unadorned depictions of his models. The family sphere, as a place of refuge from state censorship and spying, played an important role during the Biedermeier era. In higher social circles, especially, it was very fashionable to capture one's family in paintings. In such family portraits, for instance the watercolor *Gathering of the Austrian Imperial Family* (1834), the depicted are shown in lively interactions,

while the family's social standing and wealth is reflected in precious textiles and the protagonists' surroundings. Genre paintings, meanwhile, presented family idylls as the ideal image of society.



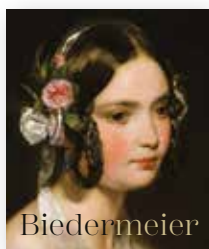
FERDINAND GEORG WALDMÜLLER
Restored to New Life, 1852
 LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections,
 Vaduz–Vienna, Photo: LIECHTENSTEIN.
 The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna

SCENES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE, FAMILY IDYLLS AND MISERY

Depictions of everyday scenes and events from the lives of farmers and craftsmen were highly popular at the time. A master of staging such scenes was Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. In his painting *Restored to New Life* (1852), he coupled the heightening and beautification of the everyday with a naturalistic manner of depiction. Beholders encountered an optimistic attitude towards life in such renderings. While the era brought great, often ephemeral wealth to the upper classes, other strata of society lived in abject poverty. Some Biedermeier artists, like Josef Danhauser, addressed this divide in socio-critical works, which at times express a bitter irony.

HISTORY, RELIGION AND THE APPROACH TO THE NAKED BODY

In Viennese Painting, it was especially the events connected to the House of Habsburg that played a central role. In Hungary, the Bohemian part of the Empire and in Lombardy-Venetia, too, themes from national history took center stage. In an Italy striving towards independence, the painter Francesco Hayez was the driving force in this genre. He effortlessly transported the beholders of his works back to Antiquity, highlighted scenes from local history or addressed religious themes, for instance in his rendering of the naked Saint Mary Magdalene as a Penitent in the Desert (1825). In Vienna or Budapest, only few artists dared to render naked bodies, especially female nudes.



The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue in German and English, with essays by Lili-Vienne Debus, Sabine Grabner, Johann Kräftner, Stefan Kutzenberger, Michaela Lindinger, Fernando Mazzocca, Juliane Mikoletzky, Adrienn Prágai and Radim Vondráček, as well as a prologue by Hans-Peter Wipplinger.

CURATOR: JOHANN KRÄFTNER
CURATORIAL ASSISTANT: LILI-VIENNE DEBUS



JOŽEF TOMINC (GIUSEPPE TOMINZ)

Selbstporträt am Fenster, 1826

Narodna galerija, Ljubljana

Foto: Narodna galerija, Ljubljana/Janko Dermastja

ARTISTS FEATURED IN THE EXHIBITION

JOSEF ABEL (Aschach bei Linz 1764–1818 Vienna) | **JAKOB ALT** (Frankfurt am Main 1789–1872 Vienna) | **RUDOLF VON ALT** (Vienna 1812–1905 Vienna) | **FRIEDRICH VON AMERLING** (Vienna 1803–1887 Vienna) | **ROSALIA AMON** (Palermo 1825–1856 Vienna) | **MIKLÓS BARABÁS** (Catalina, Transylvania 1810–1898 Budapest) | **JÓZSEF BORSOS** (Veszprém 1821–1883 Budapest) | **FRIEDRICH AUGUST BRAND** (Vienna 1735–1806 Vienna) | **GIUSEPPE CANELLA THE ELDER** (Verona 1788–1847 Florence) | **CARLO CANELLA** (Verona 1800–1879 Milan) | **ÁGOST ELEK CANZI** (Baden bei Wien 1808–1866 Budapest) | **JOSEF DANHAUSER** (Vienna 1805–1845 Vienna) | **KARL DELAVILLA** | **ALBERT CHRISTOPH DIES** (Hanover 1755–1822 Vienna) | **GEORG DÖBLER** (Prague 1788–1845 Prague) | **FRANZ EGGER** | **JOHANN NEPOMUK ENDER** (Vienna 1793–1854 Vienna) | **THOMAS ENDER** (Vienna 1793–1875 Vienna) | **JOHANN CHRISTOPH ERHARD** (Nuremberg 1795–1822 Rome) | **FRANZ EYBL** (Vienna 1806–1880 Vienna) | **PETER FENDI** (Vienna 1796–1842 Vienna) | **JOHANN FRANKENBERGER** (Hadamar 1807–1874 Vienna) | **FRIEDRICH GAUERMANN** (Scheuchenstein bei Miesenbach/Lower Austria 1807–1862 Vienna) | **EDUARD GURK** (Vienna 1801–1841 Jerusalem) | **FRANCESCO HAYEZ** (Venice 1791–1882 Milan) | **FRANZ HEINRICH** (Náchod, Bohemia 1802–1890 Brunn am Gebirge, Lower Austria) | **JÁNOS HOFBAUER** (Győr/Raab 1803–1839 Buda) | **JOHANN NEPOMUK HÖCHLE** (Munich 1790–1835 Vienna) | **DOMENICO INDUNO** (Milan 1815–1878 Milan) | **ANGELO INGANNI** (Brescia 1807–1881 Brescia) | **JOSEPH KLIEBER** (Innsbruck 1773–1850 Vienna) | **JOSEF GEORG KORNHÄUSEL** (Vienna 1782–1860 Vienna) | **JOHANN PETER KRAFFT** (Hanau 1780–1856 Vienna) | **MATTHÄUS LODER** (Vienna 1781–1828 Vordernberg, Styria) | **FRIEDRICH LOOS** (Graz 1797–1890 Kiel) | **ANTONÍN MACHEK** (Podlažice, Bohemia 1775–1844 Prague) | **JOSEF MÁNES** (Prague 1820–1871 Prague) | **GIACOMO MARASTONI** (Venice 1804–1860 Budapest) | **KÁROLY MARKÓ** (Levoča 1793–1860 Italy) | **MATHIAS MERENFELD** | **JOHANN MEYR** (Silberberg/Bohemia, now Poland 1775–1841 Adolf bei Winterberg/Bohemia) | **ERNST CHRISTIAN MOSER** (Graz 1815–1867 Graz) | **MARKUS PERNHART** (Untermieger, Ebenthal, Carinthia 1824–1871 Klagenfurt) | **LOUISA PIEPENHAGENOVÁ** (Prague 1825–1893 Prague) | **BENEDIKT PIRINGER** (Vienna 1780–1826 Paris) | **IGNAZ RAFFALT** (Weißkirchen, Styria 1800–1857 Hainbach, Vienna) | **JOSEPH REBELL** (Vienna 1787–1828 Dresden) | **FRIEDRICH PHILIPP REINHOLD** (Gera 1779–1840 Vienna) | **HEINRICH REINHOLD** (Gera 1788–1825 Rome) | **JOHANN BAPTIST REITER** (Linz 1813–1890 Vienna) | **HUBERT SATTLER** (Salzburg 1817–1904 Vienna) | **HENRY SAVILL DAVY** | **CARL PHILIPP SCHALLHAS** (Pressburg [now Bratislava] 1767–1797 Vienna) | **JOHANN EVANGELIST SCHEFFER VON LEONHARDSHOFF** (Vienna 1795–1822 Vienna) | **JOHANN NEPOMUK SCHÖDLBERGER** (Vienna 1779–1853 Vienna) | **JÓZSEF KÁROLY SCHÖFFT** (Pest 1776–1851 Pest) | **AUGUST THEODOR SCHÖFFT** (Pest 1809–1888 London) | **EDE SPIRÓ** (Pozsony/Pressburg [now Bratislava] 1805–1856 Vienna) | **FRANZ SCHROTZBERG** (Vienna 1811–1889 Graz) | **LEOPOLD STÖBER** (Vienna 1807–1832 Vienna) | **WILHELM STEINFELD** (Vienna 1816–1854 Bad Ischl) | **EDUARD SWOBODA** (Vienna 1814–1902 Hallstatt) | **KÁROLY TELEPY** (Debrecen 1828–1906 Budapest) | **MICHAEL THONET** (Boppard 1796–1871 Vienna) | **FRANTIŠEK TKADLÍK** (Prague 1786–1840 Prague) | **GIUSEPPE TOMINZ** (Jožef Tominc) (Görz/Gorizia/Gorica 1790–1866 Gradišče nad Prvačino/Gradiscutta in Val Vipacco) | **FERDINAND GEORG WALDMÜLLER** (Vienna 1793–1865 Hinterbrühl bei Mödling, Lower Austria) | **KAREL WÜRBS** (Prague 1807–1876 Prague)



LINK ZUR WEBPAGE:

www.leopoldmuseum.org/de/ausstellungen/digitale-ausstellungen/biedermeier/en

EXHIBITION FACTS

BIEDERMEIER

THE RISE OF AN ERA

9TH APRIL–27TH JULY 2025 | LEVEL -2

CURATOR: Johann Kräftner

CURATORIAL ASSISTANT: Lili-Vienne Debus

ARTISTS: 73

EXHIBITS

Total number of exhibits: 187

Paintings: 94

Watercolors: 30

Graphic works: 7

Sculptures: 3

Items of furniture: 10

Arts-and-crafts objects: 17

Items of clothing: 4

Objects, archival material/photographs: 22



CATALOGUE ACCOMPANYING THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue in German and English:

BIEDERMEIER. EINE EPOCHE IM AUFBRUCH

BIEDERMEIER. THE RISE OF AN ERA

Editors: Johann Kräftner, Hans-Peter Wipplinger

Authors: Lili-Vienne Debus, Sabine Grabner, Johann Kräftner, Stefan Kutzenberger, Michaela Lindinger, Fernando Mazzocca, Juliane Mikoletzky, Adrienn Prágai and Radim Vondráček, with a foreword by Hans-Peter Wipplinger

23.5 × 28 cm, 328 pages, 260 color illustrations

Publishers: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, Cologne

Sales price: EUR 39.90

Available at the Leopold Museum Shop: leopoldmuseum.org/shop



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Daily, except Tuesdays, from 10 am–6 pm (last admission: 5.30 pm), **open on public holidays**

PORR NIGHT: Free admission every first Thursday of each month, 6 pm – 9 pm

For up-to-date information on our **opening times**, please visit:

leopoldmuseum.org/en/visit/opening-hours

ADMISSION

Regular ticket: EUR 17.00

Ticket information: leopoldmuseum.org/en/visit/tickets

PROGRAM

For up-to-date information on our **program related to the exhibition:** leopoldmuseum.org

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