

## IS THAT BIEDERMEIER?

### Amerling, Waldmüller and more

Lower Belvedere  
21 October 2016 to 12 February 2017



József Borsos  
Emir from Lebanon (Portrait of Edmund Count Zichy), 1843  
Oil on canvas  
154 × 119 cm  
Museum of Fine Arts-Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

## **IS THAT BIEDERMEIER? Amerling, Waldmüller and more**

Die The Belvedere's major autumn exhibition focuses on the development of painting in the years between 1830 and 1860 and provocatively asks: "Is that Biedermeier?" Curated by Sabine Grabner, the show runs from 21 October 2016 to 12 February 2017 at the Lower Belvedere.

The exhibition centres around Austrian painting and how art developed in the imperial city of Vienna. It features portraits, landscapes, and genre pictures. Painting first blossomed in the 1830s and this heyday continued well beyond the middle of the century, until the building of the Ringstrasse heralded the advent of Historicism in Austrian art. The show therefore begins in the midst of the historical Biedermeier era and continues beyond this period. Painting's continuous evolution over these years reveals that art and history influenced each other only to a certain extent. The Revolution of 1848 – marking the end of the Biedermeier period and the era known as *Vormärz* – is a case in point, as its impact on art was confined to depicting the political event and it had no effect on the technique of painting or the composition of pictures.

*„The Belvedere is in possession of one of the most outstanding collections of 19th century art, including arthistoric masterpieces. Therefore, it was my wish to look at this era in art history from a new scientific point of view. The exhibition Is that Biedermeier? Amerling, Waldmüller and more presents the era from 1830 to 1860 in a different light and possibly has the effect that the term Biedermeier will be used more carefully in painting. The great achievements of artists originally attributed to the Biedermeier era go far beyond the end of the historic epoch“,* says Agnes Husslein-Arco, director of the Belvedere.

**The question “Is that Biedermeier?” automatically begs another: “What does the audience see as Biedermeier?”**

The thinking of the time is reflected in the choice of subject matter and not in painting's stylistic development. Scenes from bourgeois life were depicted.

**Waldmüller's** *On Corpus Christi Morning* (1857), *Brushwood Gatherers in the Vienna Woods* (1855), and *Early Spring in the Vienna Woods* (1861, all Belvedere, Vienna) are still regarded, out of habit, as *the* quintessential examples of Biedermeier painting, despite the fact that they were created long after the end of this era. However, in their treatment of light, space, and their approach to narrative, these works are among the highlights of Realistic genre painting, even when seen in an international context.

As a way of dislodging some of these entrenched ideas, the exhibition showcases works that differ widely in both subject and appearance, although they all date from the same period. To create a common background, painters were chosen who were born between 1790 and 1820. Their artistic training was therefore based on similar ideas and they thus developed under comparable conditions. Furthermore, this selection was not confined to Austrian painters but went beyond the boundaries of present-day Austria to encompass **northern Italy, Slovenia, Hungary** and the **Czech Republic**. A synopsis of art's development in the mid-nineteenth century throughout Austria and the Habsburg crown lands emerges as a result. Objects were selected in consultation with the art historians in these countries in order to ensure that the exhibition presents a representative survey.

*“Particularly interesting are those artists whose works display a high degree of independence and who opposed traditional academic principles. Friedrich von **Amerling**, whose single-figure genre paintings are unique in the Viennese art world, deserves a special mention”,* says curator Sabine Grabner. Josef **Danhauser's** inventive pictorial narratives also had a great impact, as did the outstanding portraits and genre scenes by the Hungarian-born József **Borsos**, who worked mainly in Vienna. Further examples include the bold landscapes by the Czech painter Bedřich **Havránek**, the superb figures by the Milan-based Francesco **Hayez**, the diverse images of people by Johann Baptist **Reiter** from Upper Austria, and the expressive portraits by Giuseppe **Tominz**, who was born in Görz/Gorizia and worked in Trieste. *“The Viennese artist Ferdinand Georg **Waldmüller** holds a special position in the exhibition, as he was pioneering in his portraits, landscapes, and scenes with figures. During the Biedermeier period it was Waldmüller who addressed the poverty of people on society's fringes and topics such as possessions being seized, evictions, and child labour”,* continues Sabine Grabner.

The exhibition at the Lower Belvedere showcases top loans from public and private collections from Italy, Germany, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in addition to approximately fifty works from the Belvedere's own holdings, the world's largest collection of Biedermeier art.

Complementing the paintings, the exhibition also features **furniture**, tracing its development from the 1830s onwards. A sequence of chairs and sofas plots the various stylistic changes from Biedermeier to the Rococo Revival and beyond. This allows comparisons to be drawn between these objects and those illustrated in the pictures.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **catalogue** with German and English editions. It comprises articles about painting in Austria and the Habsburg crown lands as well as the development of furniture production during this period. The publication expands on this scope in essays about art of the time in France, Britain, Denmark, and Germany.

As part of the show, visitors are also invited to consider the question "Is that Biedermeier?"

A **selfie point** invites to take the perfect Biedermeier picture. Postings can be published on the Belvedere's social media channels under the hashtag **#DasistBiedermeier**.

## LIST OF ARTISTS

Rudolf von Alt  
 Friedrich von Amerling  
 Massimo d'Azeglio  
 Miklós Barabás  
 Karl von Blaas  
 József Borsos  
 Josef Danhauser  
 Josef Ulrich Danhauser sen.  
 Peter Hubert Desvignes  
 Franz Dobiaschovsky  
 Anton Einsle  
 Johann Nepomuk Ender  
 Thomas Ender  
 Franz Eybl  
 Peter Fendi  
 Friedrich Gauermann  
 Michelangelo Grigoletti  
 Anton Hansch  
 Friedrich Havránek  
 Francesco Hayez  
 Josef Höger  
 Domenico Induno  
 Sándor Kozina  
 Paul Künl  
 Friedrich Loos  
 Antonín Machek

Ferdinand Mallitsch  
 Josef Mánes  
 Károly Markó d.Ä.  
 Pompeo Marino Molmenti  
 Giuseppe Molteni  
 Ernst Christian Moser  
 Josef Matěj Navrátil  
 Michael Neder  
 August Piepenhagen  
 Odorico Politi  
 Carl Rahl  
 Johann Mathias Ranftl  
 Johann Baptist Reiter  
 Eduard Ritter  
 Eliseo Sala  
 Friedrich Schilcher  
 Ludwig Ferdinand Schnorr von  
 Carolsfeld  
 Franz Schrotzberg  
 Franz Steinfeld  
 Adalbert Stifter  
 Mihael Stroj  
 Eduard Swoboda  
 Giuseppe Tominz  
 August Tremel  
 Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller  
 Albert Zimmermann

## GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Exhibition title</b>	<b>IS THAT BIEDERMEIER?</b> <b>Amerling, Waldmüller and more</b>
<b>Exhibition duration</b>	21 October 2016 bis 12 February 2017
<b>Venue</b>	Lower Belvedere
<b>Exhibits</b>	117
<b>Curator</b>	Sabine Grabner
<b>Catalogue</b>	<i>Is that Biedermeier? Amerling, Waldmüller and more</i> Editors: Agnes Husslein-Arco, Sabine Grabner Hirmer Verlag 312 p., 235 x 285 mm ISBN 978-3-903114-12-8 (English Version) EUR 39,-
<b>Contact</b>	Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 (01) 795 57-0 <a href="http://www.belvedere.at">www.belvedere.at</a>
<b>Opening hours</b>	Daily 10 am to 6 pm, Wednesday 10 am to 9 pm
<b>Regular Entry</b>	€ 12,- (Lower Belvedere)
<b>Guided Tours</b>	T +43 (01) 795 57-134, M <a href="mailto:public@belvedere.at">public@belvedere.at</a>
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Complimentary images can be downloaded for press purposes at [www.belvedere.at/press](http://www.belvedere.at/press).