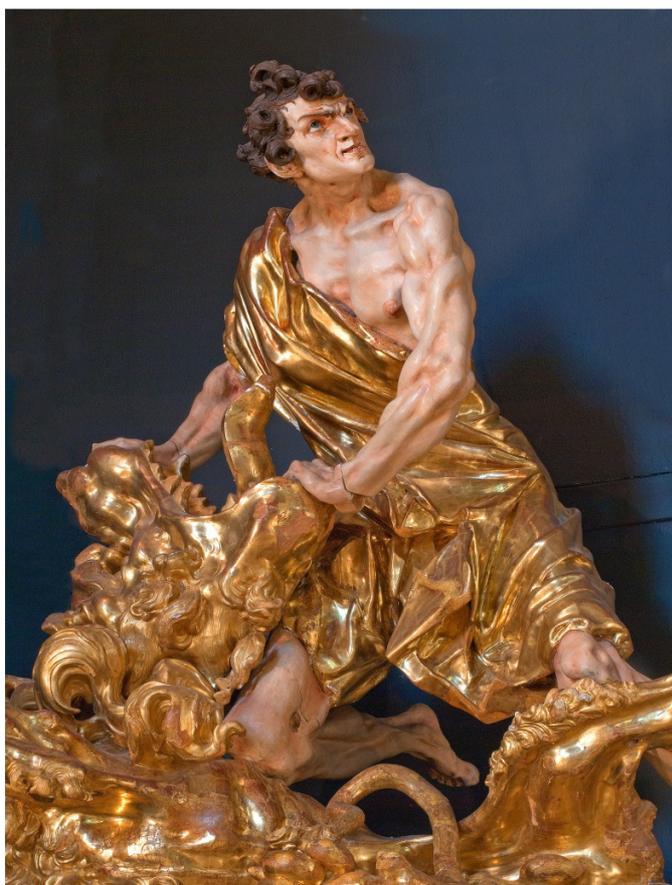


HEAVENLY!

The Baroque Sculptor Johann Georg Pinsel

Winterpalais
28 October 2016 to 12 February 2017



Johann Georg Pinsel
Samson rendering a lion (detail), 1758 the latest
Wood, polychromy and gilding, 139 x 160 x 110 cm
© Lviv National Art Gallery

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The Belvedere honours the ingenious, albeit largely unknown Late Baroque sculptor Johann Georg Pinsel with his first monographic exhibition in Austria. From 28 October 2016 to 12 February 2017, a Baroque spectacle of expressive painting and carving will be staged at the Winterpalais of Prince Eugene of Savoy. In addition to some twenty objects by Pinsel and his studio, the show will also include works by Austrian painters of the Late Baroque.

Johann Georg Pinsel continues to baffle scholars to this day: little is known about his life, origins, and artistic training. His first and middle names were only identified several years ago, and his date and place of birth are still buried in obscurity. Pinsel was active in regions that are now part of **Western Ukraine**, particularly around Lemberg (Lviv). The area, which during his lifetime belonged to Poland, was subsequently incorporated into the Habsburg Empire and in 1939 fell to the Soviet Union; in 1991, it became part of today's Ukraine.

During Pinsel's life and career, the region was prospering. Wealthy Polish aristocratic families ensured that the artist received numerous commissions. It can be assumed that Pinsel had immigrated from abroad. In the Baroque age, the migration of artists was entirely common, as they were always in search of new projects and wished to expand their artistic abilities.

"With this exhibition dedicated to the work of Johann Georg Pinsel, we seek to present an unknown Baroque sculptor who developed his unmistakable style far removed from the typical hubs for cultural production. Everyone who has seen his expressive sculptures will agree that Pinsel has until now been unjustly neglected by international art history," says Agnes Husslein-Arco, Director of the Belvedere.

Pinsel's oeuvre, on the other hand, is better known than his biography. Working alongside his architect friend Meretyn, he decorated primarily **churches between Lviv and Buchach** (Polish: Buczacz) with **stunning sculptures in wood and stone**. These expressive figures are known to have been created within the short period of a decade, between 1750 and 1760. With his expressive language of form, Pinsel had a crucial impact on Lemberg's Baroque sculpture. He became one of the most coveted artists and inspired many followers.

„Within a short period of time, Pinsel received several considerable commissions. This soon required the hiring of staff and the training of students, who carried on his expressive style each in their own right“, explain the exhibition’s curators, Maïke Hohn and Georg Lechner, about the far-reaching influence of the Baroque sculptor.

The powerful expressivity of his figures not only derives from their facial expressions and gestures, but also and above all from the **opulence of their garments**. In their expressive eloquence, they reflect **parallels of contemporary painting** practiced in the environment of the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. Especially the paintings by Franz Anton Maulbertsch, with their occasionally bizarre protagonists, are particularly close to Pinsel’s exalted sculptures.

Under Soviet rule, a major part of Pinsel’s works was **removed from sacred buildings or destroyed**. While many of his sculptures were abandoned and fell into ruins, others could be rescued and entered the collections of museums. Many of the statuettes and sculptures presented in the exhibition **used to be installed in monasteries or churches**; in many cases, however, it is no longer possible today to identify their original whereabouts.

Yet in order to fully understand these pictorial works, knowledge of the context for which they were conceived is indispensable. Especially in the Baroque age, **architecture, painting, and sculpture formed an interwoven and perfectly concerted ensemble**. Today the isolated presentation of sculptures frequently tempts us to read them as independent works of art. However, in terms of form, composition, and content, they were embedded in a superior artistic concept and sacral programme. This is why in the exhibition paintings and statues are presented side by side in order to convey the impact of their original arrangement around an altar.

The accompanying exhibition catalogue takes a closer look at the life and work of the sculptor, the region around Lemberg (Lviv) during the 18th century, as well as Johann Georg Pinsel’s sculptures and work in the European context.

Complimentary images can be downloaded for press purposes at www.belvedere.at/press.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	HEAVENLY! The Baroque Sculptor Johann Georg Pinsel
Exhibition duration	28 October 2016 to 12 February 2017
Venue	Winterpalais (Himmelfortgasse 8, 1010 Vienna)
Exhibits	20 Sculptures, 13 Paintings (1 loan, 12 works from the collection of the Belvedere)
Curators	Maike Hohn, Georg Lechner
Catalogue	<i>Heavenly! The Baroque Sculptor Johann Georg Pinsel</i> Editors: Agnes Husslein-Arco, Maike Hohn, Georg Lechner (in-house publishing) 144 p., German Edition: ISBN 978-3-903114-10-4 EUR 29,-
Contact	Himmelfortgasse 8, 1010 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-0 www.belvedere.at
Opening hours	Daily 10 am to 6 pm
Regular Entry	€ 11,- (Winterpalais)
Guided Tours	Belvedere & Winterpalais Visitor Services & Art Education T +43 1 795 57-134, M public@belvedere.at
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