

MASTERPIECES IN FOCUS TINA BLAU

Upper Belvedere
16 December 2016 to 9 April 2017



Tina Blau
Spring in the Prater, 1882
Oil on canvas, 214 x 291 cm
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Masterpieces in Focus: Tina Blau

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One hundred years after her death, the Belvedere honours the Viennese painter Tina Blau with an exhibition held within the framework of the series *Masterpieces in Focus*. From 16 December 2016 to 9 April 2017, the show, which is curated by Markus Fellingner, will present 49 paintings from all of the artist's periods. Aside from such masterpieces as *Spring in the Prater* (1882, Belvedere), hitherto little-known works will be on view that have been rediscovered in the course of research conducted in the context of the artist's catalogue raisonné. The Belvedere is the first museum in Austria to present a freely accessible online version of the catalogue raisonné of the works of Tina Blau, which has been compiled at the museum's Research Centre.

"With this exhibition at the Belvedere, we pay tribute to the exceptional artist Tina Blau, who was not only a significant painter, but also a modern, independent, and emancipated personality. In this, she proved a role model for the future generations of young women artists," says Agnes Husslein-Arco, Director of the Belvedere.

"Tina Blau was probably the first female Austrian artist touring and wandering through Europe in search for new motifs. In this course she studied many different artistic styles and developed a broad personal artistic repertoire. Her analytical approach and the conscious drive for creative development are visible especially in her numerous small oil paintings", says Markus Fellingner, curator of the exhibition.

The Life and Work of Tina Blau

Born in Vienna in 1845 the daughter of a Jewish doctor, Tina Blau numbered among the most successful landscape painters of her time. At the young age of fifteen, she took private painting lessons from a student of Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. When she was only sixteen years old, she undertook study trips to Bohemia and Transylvania, where she painted her first large-scale landscape compositions. August Schaeffer, the future director of the imperial court's Art History Museum, was the first to recognize the young artist's talent. He became one of her most important patrons and also advised her to study the motifs of nature outdoors. The young artist raised funds for a study visit in Munich, which was then a leading art metropolis, by selling one of her paintings to the Austrian Art Club. From 1870 on, following her studies in Munich, she substantially contributed to the development of so-called "atmospheric Impressionism" (Stimmungs-impressionismus) in Austria. Sharing a studio with Emil Jakob Schindler, she teamed up with him and his circle to paint unpretentious motifs *en*

plein air, such as in the Prater and the wetlands of the Danube, her compositions reflecting a modern approach to landscape painting.

Travelling Brings New Perspectives

During extensive stays in Hungary, Holland, Germany, France, and Switzerland, Tina Blau drew her inspirations from the latest developments in European painting. Moreover, she perfected her technique on countless motifs she encountered during her travels. In her important work *Spring at the Prater* (1882, Belvedere), her style had already fully matured. Informed by the rediscovery of Biedermeier's realism, it also embraced stylistic tendencies from Impressionism. When Tina Blau received a "mention honorable" for this work at the 1883 Paris Salon, it was the only award given to an artist from abroad. The painting, which was then without precedent in Vienna, made Tina Blau an artist of European renown, and she was subsequently represented in almost all major international exhibitions.

Strong Woman – Influential Artist

Tina Blau fervently committed herself to the support of future generations of young women artists: first as a teacher at the "Ladies' Academy" of the Munich Art Club and later as a co-founder of and teacher at the *Art School for Women and Girls* in Vienna. She was also a close friend of such leading suffragettes as Rosa Mayreder, Auguste Fickert, and Marianne Hainisch.

Even at the pinnacle of her career, Tina Blau saw herself confronted with the fact that her performance as an artist was judged with regard to her sex. On the occasion of the opening of the Modern Gallery (today's Belvedere) in 1903, the art critic Adolf Kronfeld described her masterpiece *Krieau at the Prater* (1902, Belvedere) in a similar vein. The critic particularly praised Tina Blau's preparedness to leave school for outdoor nature in order to paint – a habit then practiced only by her male colleagues. However, this limited view stood in the way of a genuine appraisal of her artistic output. This is now made possible again through the Belvedere's exhibition, staged to mark the 100th anniversary of the artist's death.

The publication accompanying the exhibition contains several essays, such as by the art historian Claus Jesina, who deals with the artist's changed perspective brought about by her travels and with her treatment of light in specific landscapes; Julie M. Johnson describes the exceptional position of Tina Blau as a woman artist in a world dominated by male art; and exhibition curator Markus Fellingner examines the development of her style and the significance of her "rediscovery" of Biedermeier realism.

The online edition of the Belvedere's catalogue raisonné of the complete works of Tina Blau can be accessed at werkverzeichnisse.belvedere.at

Exhibitions held within the series "Masterpieces in Focus" are made possible with 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

Tina Blau

- 1845 Regina Leopoldine Blau was born in the army barracks at No. 27 Heumarkt in Vienna's third district on 15 November. Her father, who came from Prague, worked there as a military surgeon.
- 1859 She receives her first training from Antal Hanély, a student of Waldmüller. The young artist paints several still lifes.
- 1860 Tina Blau is taught by August Schaeffer.
- 1861 She paints her first landscapes *en plein air*, directly in front of the motif.
- 1868 Tina Blau presents a now-unidentified painting at the opening exhibition of the Vienna Künstlerhaus.
- 1869 At the First International Art Exhibition at the Vienna Künstlerhaus, Tina Blau shows her painting *Limekiln in Evening Light*.
- 1873 Participation in the Vienna World's Fair with pictures of the regulation of the Danube.
- 1874 Emil Jakob Schindler shares his studio in Mayerhofgasse with Tina Blau.
- 1877 Tina Blau moves into the studio rented by Schindler in the Pavilion of Amateurs, a building left behind after the 1873 World's Fair in the Prater. They collaborate in a large composition showing a view of Amsterdam.
- 1879 Journey to Italy. Emil Jakob Schindler cedes the studio at the Prater to Tina Blau.
- 1881 Tina Blau paints a number of flower still lifes intended to decorate the walls and ceilings of the Palais Zierer, as well as sixteen glass windows featuring similar floral motifs for the staircase. At the same time, she completes her monumental masterpiece *Spring at the Prater*, which made her famous in no time.
- 1882 The rejection of the painting by the hanging commission of the International Art Exhibition at the Vienna Künstlerhaus due to excessive brightness is prevented thanks to the advocacy of Hans Makart. The painting is purchased by the art collector Friedrich W. Crone.
- 1883 Tina Blau is invited to exhibit *Spring at the Prater* and a still life at the Paris Salon and receives an honourable mention. She marries the Munich-based horse and battle painter Heinrich Lang (1838–1891), which makes it necessary for her to convert to the Protestant religion.

- 1885 Participation at the World's Fair in Antwerp.
- 1887 Tina Blau becomes the first female teacher of the newly established classes for landscape, still life, and flower painting at the Ladies' Academy of the Munich Women's Art Club.
- 1890 The first collective exhibition of sixty works by Tina Blau is held at the Munich Art Club.
- 1893 Tina Blau participates in the World's Fair in Chicago, winning a gold medal for the painting *Felled Greatness*.
- 1894 She returns to Vienna and works on several studies and paintings in the Belvedere gardens.
- 1897 She wins the Small State Medal in Gold for a now-lost painting of the Prater.
- 1898 At the beginning of the year, Tina Blau starts teaching at the Art School for Women and Girls, where she heads the class for landscape and still life painting until 1915.
- 1899 Collective exhibition at Kunstsalon Pisko in Vienna. The exhibition also includes her masterpiece *Spring at the Prater*, which is subsequently acquired for the Imperial Picture Gallery.
- 1900 Participation in the Paris World's Fair.
- 1903 Second collective exhibition at Kunstsalon Pisko in Vienna. The painting *Krieau at the Prater* is acquired for the newly founded Modern Gallery at the Lower Belvedere.
- 1909 Collective exhibition at Galerie Arnot in Vienna. The show subsequently travels through Germany and Austria and is also visited by Emperor Francis Joseph I.
- 1912 For her painting *Outside the Walls of the Cemetery*, shown in an exhibition at the Salzburg Artists' Association, Tina Blau is honoured with the Grand State Medal in Gold. The Belvedere acquires three further paintings by Tina Blau.
- 1916 Tina Blau dies of heart failure on 31 October.
- 1917 Estate sale at the auction house C. J. Wawra, Vienna, and memorial exhibition at the Künstlerhaus.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title	Masterpieces in Focus Tina Blau
Exhibition Dates	16 December 2016 to 9 April 2017
Venue	Upper Belvedere
Exhibits	49 oil paintings
Curator	Markus Fellingner
Catalogue	Tina Blau (German version) Hg.: Agnes Husslein-Arco, Markus Fellingner Belvedere, 132 Pages, 19 x 24,5, Hardcover ISBN: 978-3-903114-13-5 € 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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