

Temporary Exhibition

A MARVELLOUS SCIENCE

Passion for Porcelain in Baroque Vienna

(30 January – 30 March 2025)

Liechtenstein Garden Palace, Fürstengasse 1, 1090 Vienna

Daily between 10 am and 6 pm, free admission

The Princely Liechtenstein Collections house exceptional holdings of creations produced at the Du Paquier porcelain manufactory in Vienna – only the second such enterprise to be founded in Europe. In the temporary exhibition A MARVELLOUS SCIENCE (30 January – 30 March 2025), porcelain made by the Du Paquier manufactory will be on display alongside examples of the East Asian models that inspired it, complemented by precious lacquer and silver work, and paintings. Through these objects the exhibition tells a tale encompassing ingenuity, passion for collecting, international trade, industrial espionage, the exchange of technologies and, not least, the splendour of the era's festive culture.

No material represents the essence of the early eighteenth century better than porcelain. Lustre, purity and the fascination of the exotic are among the elements of this 'arcane art', half miracle, half science. The inventories of the Princes and Princesses von und zu Liechtenstein tell of this passion, to which artists and scholars also succumbed. The exhibition explores the inspirations of early Viennese porcelain as the product of a spectacular invention, astonishing artistic experiment, and as a both practical and magnificent feature of the tea and banqueting table that was in tune with the interiors and interests of its time.

The spirit of scientific enquiry

The beginnings of the history of European porcelain were driven by an enthusiasm for collecting and the spirit of scientific enquiry. Impressed by imports of China from Eastern Asia with colours and decors that had never been seen before, alchemists sought to discover the arcanum or secret recipe for this material. In 1718 the Vienna Porcelain Manufactory – only the second in Europe – was founded by Claudius Innocentius du Paquier, an agent at the Imperial War Council, under imperial privilege. Its products are works of distinctive character, ranging from decorative playfulness to reflections of contemporary art and science.

The spirit of Baroque Vienna

Never monumental, Du Paquier's porcelain is full of detail, intended to be observed and handled with close attention, and reflecting the spirit of Baroque Vienna, the imperial dynasty and the families in their circle. Princess Erdmunda von Liechtenstein (1652–1737) left an important collection of early East Asian porcelain; the emperor and empress desired a porcelain cabinet to compare with the much-admired example in the palace of their friend Prince Joseph Wenzel von Liechtenstein (1696–1772).

Passion for collecting

The extensive collection of rare Asian and early European porcelain assembled by the Princes von und zu Liechtenstein has been generously enhanced by loans from international institutions and private collections. Also including precious lacquer and silverwork, paintings and prints, the exhibition tells a tale encompassing ingenuity, passion for collecting, international trade, industrial espionage, the exchange of technologies and, not least, the splendour of the era's festive culture.

GUIDED TOURS OF THE TEMPORARY EXHIBITION AND THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

As part of WUNDER UND WISSENSCHAFT, guided tours of the special exhibition and guided tours of the permanent exhibition of the Princely Collections on the 1st floor will be offered daily from January 30 to March 30, 2025. There will also be guided tours of the special exhibition in English every Saturday. **For information on special guided tours of the temporary and the permanent exhibition and bookings:**

www.palaisliechtenstein.com

For further information on the Princely Collections:

www.liechtensteincollections.at

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