

Temporary exhibition

HERCULES OF THE ARTS

Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein and Vienna around 1700

(16 February to 1 April 2024)

Liechtenstein Garden Palace, free admission

»BUON GUSTO ITALIANO«

Italianità was the prime influence on art and culture in Vienna around 1700. The temporary exhibition HERCULES OF THE ARTS (16 February to 1 April 2024) focuses on the predilection of Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein for the painting, architecture and sculpture of Italian masters. By promoting these artists he took his place as a passionate collector of art among the most important patrons of his time.

Around 1700, following the relief of the second Turkish siege in 1683, Vienna developed into a cosmopolitan city, becoming one of the major political and economic centres of its time. The nobility in particular put their mark on the urban scene, commissioning internationally sought-after artists, including many from Italy, for the building and decoration of their palaces. Italians from many different regions of the peninsula were represented at all levels of society, constituting at around ten percent the largest group of emigrants in Vienna in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Another important factor in the dissemination of Italian art and culture was the arrival of Italian princesses as brides for members of the Habsburg family. Eleonora Gonzaga, the second wife of Emperor Ferdinand II, introduced opera to Vienna, for example, and Italian singers, musicians and composers were promoted and supported.

The huge esteem accorded to Italian art at the Viennese court was not only an aesthetic, but also clearly political statement designed to legitimize the Habsburg claim to power, given that they traced their roots back to the ancient Romans. »The princes of the House of Liechtenstein likewise followed this principle in their art patronage and strove to use it to give visual expression to their status and to their loyalty and closeness to the Imperial House, thus also promoting their own cause in competition with other families of the high nobility«, explains art historian Silvia Tammaro in her essay in the catalogue accompanying the temporary exhibition.

The discovery of Italy and its arts was also promoted by the so-called »Kavalierstour« made by young scions of the nobility, a journey across Europe that served to increase their knowledge of other cities and courts, improve their abilities in foreign languages and extend their knowledge of art, culture, history and politics. The young Johann Adam Andreas von Liechtenstein was sent twice to Italy by his father Karl Eusebius. However, these journeys were not primarily intended for the traditional educational purposes, taking him instead to the laboratories of famous alchemists in Venice.

In his policy of acquiring and commissioning art, Johann Adam Andreas acted wholly in keeping with the principles instilled in him by his art-loving father, whose purchases formed the starting point and basis of his son's collection. In terms of subjects, Johann Adam Andreas was less interested in religious motifs; the works in his collection tend to reflect his passion for ancient mythology and history painting.

A lively correspondence between the Bolognese artist Marcantonio Franceschini and Johann Adam Andreas attests to the prince's predilection for »buon gusto Italiano« and his criteria for assessing and acquiring works of art. Franceschini executed numerous paintings for the interior decoration of the Garden Palace in the Viennese suburb of Rossau, including »The Birth of Adonis« (after 1692), and acted as agent to the Princely House in the finding and purchasing of art objects. Preserved in the Princely Archives, this correspondence conveys a vivid picture of the relationship between artist and patron.

Johann Adam Andreas also engaged Italian masters for the designing and building of the Garden Palace. The tender for the main building was won by the Bolognese architect Domenico Egidio Rossi. However, by 1692 he had been replaced by Domenico Martinelli, who had been summoned from Rome and who made major changes to the original designs.

Probably at the behest of Emperor Leopold I, the painter and architect Andrea Pozzo was summoned to Vienna from Rome. Between 1704 and 1708, Pozzo was engaged by Johann Adam Andreas to paint the ceiling fresco in the Hercules Hall of the Garden Palace. With his magisterial quadratura painting, its illusionistic architecture executed from a central perspective, he made a major contribution to Baroque interior design north of the Alps. Jupiter, who in contemporary iconography stood for the emperor, is depicted receiving Hercules into the company of the gods. In relating himself to the ancient hero, Johann Adam Andreas ensured that the great ceremonial hall of the palace simultaneously became a hall of fame celebrating the House of Liechtenstein. The iconographic decoration of the Garden Palace was complemented by stucco relief work created by the Ticinese artist Santino Bussi, for example, his »Hercules Slaying Ladon« (1704/05) in the Sala Terrena.

The prince also carried on a lively correspondence over the years with the Florentine court medallist and sculptor Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi, resulting in numerous purchases. Works in marble such as Giuseppe Mazza's »Bust of Venus« (1692) or the »Allegory of Vice« (c. 1684–1694) by Filippo Parodi joined the holdings of Italian sculpture in the prince's collection; in a letter to Franceschini he stated that he knew of no better marble sculptors in all of Italy than Mazza and Parodi, and that only they merited the appellation of »virtuosi«.

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(16 February to 1 April 2024)

Liechtenstein Garden Palace, Fürstengasse 1, 1090 Vienna

Monday to Sunday 10 am–6 pm

Free admission | No booking required

With the two magnificent edifices, the Garden Palace in the Rossau quarter and the City Palace near the Hofburg, Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712) created imposing monuments for himself. His rank among the foremost patrons of his time was assured not only as an ambitious commissioner of architectural projects who also drove the growth of a new urban quarter called Lichtental that continues to flourish today, but also as a fervent collector of art.

It was above all the magnificent paintings by Peter Paul Rubens that drew the admiration of contemporaries during the prince's lifetime. The exhibition provides a vivid picture of both the lively exchange between patron and artists, and an insight into the circumstances of collecting and dynastic governance in Vienna as the city prospered around 1700.

For further information about the Princely Collections visit

www.liechtensteincollections.at

GUIDED TOURS of the TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

The temporary exhibition HERCULES OF THE ARTS (16 February to 1 April 2024) at the Liechtenstein Garden Palace can be viewed free of charge. Guided tours of the temporary exhibition in German are offered daily at 9 am and 6 pm: € 15 (individual ticket; additional concession for Ö1 Club members) or € 39 (family ticket: 2 adults and 2 children aged between 12 and 18). Booking by telephone or via the website is recommended:

www.palaisliechtenstein.com

TALKS in the HERCULES HALL

The great ceiling fresco by Andrea Pozzo in the ceremonial hall of the Liechtenstein Garden Palace shows the exploits and apotheosis of the ancient hero Hercules against imposing trompe l'oeil architecture, giving the hall the name by which it is still known today. As part of the temporary exhibition HERCULES OF THE ARTS (16 February to 1 April 2024) talks about this masterpiece of secular ceiling painting will be offered: daily at 10.30 am, 1.30 and 4.30 pm; no booking required.

ENQUIRIES for PRESS and PHOTO MATERIAL:

Valerie Besl, vielseitig ||| kommunikation

valerie.besl@vielseitig.co.at

m: +43 664 833 9266

www.liechtensteincollections.at

www.palaisliechtenstein.com

