



Schönbrunn Group

KAISERLICHES ÖSTERREICH ENTDECKEN

MEDIA INFORMATION 2019

The Vienna Furniture Museum as a unique furniture museum

In the mid-eighteenth century, Maria Theresa founded the Hofmobilieninspektion, the precursor of the Vienna Furniture Museum, based on the French model of the “garde meubles”. The successor organisation, today’s Federal Administration of Moveables, is one of the largest furniture collections in the world, with more than 170,000 objects. The “Vienna Furniture Museum” is managed by the Schönbrunn Group as partner of the Federal Administration of Moveables. It shows domestic culture as it has developed for more than five centuries. The display ranges over furniture used by the imperial dynasty alongside a diversity of furnishing styles including Biedermeier, Historicism, Viennese Modernism and also contemporary furniture design. The holdings stem from former imperial ownership and from the collection of the Federal Administration of Moveables, which has been constantly growing since 1918. Changing temporary exhibitions place a special focus on the achievements of twentieth-century architecture, design and furniture, also on famous Habsburg personalities.

The [Vienna Furniture Museum](#) presents outstanding ensembles as well as individual objects that represent a rich historical cultural heritage. The heart of the museum consists of original furnishings and ensembles of former Habsburg residences, which were replaced by later items, including from Schönbrunn Palace, Belvedere Palace, Laxenburg Palace and many other stately homes. On show are carpets, chandeliers, paintings and tableware, also chairs, tables, beds, chamber commodes and entire room ensembles. The objects allotted to individual personalities of the Imperial House such as Crown Prince Rudolf and Empress Elisabeth not only reflect political events and courtly and state ceremonies, but also everyday life.

The furniture of the Imperial House

The approximately 6,500 objects shown in the museum derive from the court office founded by Maria Theresa in 1747 as the Hofmobilieninspektion, where the movables of the Imperial Court were stored and cared for until the end of the monarchy. In 1901 the Vienna Furniture Museum was given its own building on Mariahilfer Strasse 88; since 1919 it has been owned by the Republic of Austria. In 1924 an initial collection for exhibitions was opened in part of the building complex. From this exhibition presentation fifteen “Biedermeierkojen” or Biedermeier “cabinets” – are still preserved as a “museum within a museum”, in which examples of bourgeois home-living were staged using former furniture from the Imperial Court.

The current presentation goes back in its essentials to 1998, when, after comprehensive refurbishment, the museum in existence since 1924 was reopened. The reinstallation was planned to convey not only the character of a museum presentation, but also that of the still existent depot character. Therefore a walk-through depot was set up which is based on the situation as it was at the time of Emperor Franz Joseph. Furniture from the former Vienna Furniture Museum still continues to be used to equip the offices of the Austrian Federal Authorities, embassies, and for the furnishing of banquets.

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Furniture design ranging from Viennese Modernism until today

Special focus since the reopening has also been directed into furniture design ranging from Viennese Modernism until today. The Vienna Furniture Museum presents furnishings conceived by important Austrian architects, including Adolf Loos, Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffmann, Josef Frank and so forth, also contemporary designers who have constantly found a place in the collection of the Federal Administration of Moveables. Moreover, changing temporary exhibitions cast light on individual aspects of the achievements of architecture and design during the twentieth century.

Sissi in the movies

The Vienna Furniture Museum has a particularly close affinity to the film genre. In the 1970s practically all films made in Vienna were supplied with furniture from the depot – as were the legendary “Sissi films” by Ernst Marischka from the 1950s. A special feature of the museum’s tour programme is the [“Sissi in the movies“ tour](#). On this tour visitors can view furniture that was used in individual film scenes and still exists today. The corresponding film footage is shown in several languages, and additional information is given on the director, the actors, the locations, the making of the films, the historical facts contrasted with their romanticised filmic interpretations, and the international impact they had on critics and the public. Also on show are several props and a great many photos, film posters and programmes.

Interactive web portal “World of the Habsburgs”

An optimal supplement to the attractions in the Vienna Furniture Museum was created with the interactive web portal [“The World of the Habsburgs”](#) with a virtual exhibition on the history of the Habsburg Monarchy including a wide-ranging spectrum of topics, and breathing life also into the living habits and worlds of the Habsburgs. Detailed text and pictorial material casts a critical light on the leading ruler personalities and describes the historical backgrounds. The website has meanwhile become a reference project and has received many awards. It is continually augmented. Since 2014, the virtual exhibition on the 1914-1918 war, [“First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy“](#), has been available for viewing online.

The **Schönbrunn Group**, in administering Schönbrunn Palace, the Vienna Furniture Museum, the Sisi Museum in the Vienna Hofburg, also the Schloss Hof Estate, has in its charge the leading attractions of Austria’s Imperial heritage. The Schönbrunn Group is responsible for the preservation and revitalisation of the cultural assets entrusted to it. The necessary funds are provided in toto by the revenue earned by the Schönbrunn Group itself.

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