

Jakob, Franz and Rudolf von Alt

9 November 2022 – 29 January 2023

The artworks created by members of the Alt family number among the masterpieces of Austrian watercolor painting. Rooted in Biedermeier-era Vienna, their output proceeded to follow the grand arc of cultural history through to the dawn of modernism. They revolve around themes such as architecture and landscape, urban life and natural beauty.

This family of painters included Jakob Alt (1789–1872) and his sons Rudolf (1812–1905) and Franz (1821–1914). Jakob Alt left his home city of Frankfurt am Main to settle in Vienna in 1810. He supported his family by producing series of printed graphics showing townscapes and landscapes. Rudolf Alt—who was ennobled at an advanced age and has therefore been known as Rudolf von Alt since 1897—and his younger brother Franz learned the art of watercolor from their father. They eventually began collaborating as equal partners.

Both brothers attained a high level of virtuosity and expressivity as watercolorists. Franz enjoyed unparalleled esteem during his lifetime, especially in Vienna's aristocratic circles. Rudolf, for his part, lived a long and productive life that led him to originate ever-new solutions and tours de force in watercolor painting all the way into the early 20th century.

This exhibition features treasures from the museum's own holdings that impressively document the Alt family painters' great importance in the context of 19th-century art.