

THE
BEAUTY
OF NATURE

The Chamber Painters of Archduke John

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On the Beauty of Nature – Archduke John's Chamber Painters

27 February – 31 May 2015

The Albertina is presenting 150 masterpieces of Austrian watercolour painting from the prestigious collection of Archduke John (1782–1859). The Habsburg visionary commissioned the artists Johann Kniep, Karl Ruß, Jakob Gauermann, Matthäus Loder, and Thomas Ender as his 'chamber painters' to produce topographical views of Styria, Salzburg, and Tyrol. This led to the compilation of a high-quality collection comprising *vedute*, depictions of traditional costumes, and pictorial documents of early industrial plants.

Archduke John's ambitions were multifaceted and diverse: starting out from his political and military career, he proceeded to comprehensive endeavours in science, education, and the arts and devoted himself to economic and social initiatives by launching a number of seminal projects. The complexity of his thinking and of his actions is also reflected in the collections the 'Prince of Styria' commissioned and amassed, including a compilation of 1400 watercolours and drawings of mainly Alpine regions that was begun in 1802. Archduke John employed his 'chamber painters' in the manner of court painters over a period of forty years. They accompanied the archduke on his missions and journeys and received a monthly salary as members of his household.

Johann Kniep, a student of Laurenz Jansch, painted the first views of Styria for the archduke in 1802. The activity of Karl Ruß, who primarily rendered traditional costumes of the local population, lasted from 1810 to 1818. The 'Styrian prospects' by Jakob Gauermann, who was appointed chamber painter in 1818, constitute the main body of topographical landscape views of Styria. Matthäus Loder, who entered into the archduke's service in 1816, sensitively described stations in his patron's private life – first and foremost the famous love story between the archduke and Anna Plochl, the postmaster's daughter from Aussee. Thomas Ender, the last in the succession of chamber painters, was employed in 1828 as Loder's successor. In 1837 he accompanied the archduke on his journey to the Crimea, with stopovers in Odessa, Constantinople, Smyrna, Athens, and Trieste. His pictorial documentation comprised more than 300 watercolours.

Although the works differ in terms of approach and style, they are nevertheless homogeneous in character: the artists knew how to do justice to the archduke's intentions and comply with his ideas and values. John was primarily interested in conserving regional ethnic traditions and in documenting the country and its inhabitants. Moreover, it was important to him to counter the threat of uprooting caused by industrialisation and present Styria as a land of balance between past and future, between tradition and progress. On the

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other hand, Thomas Ender's pictures of glaciers in particular can be interpreted as both documents of and incentives for Alpine tourism and its rapid development.

Many of the works are characterised by idealisation, but are authentic when it comes to detail. Truthful renderings of nature and settlements in the Alpine regions at the dawn of major industrial transformations, they were and still are a basis for such multifarious scientific disciplines as historiography, geology, and ethnology. Made during the period of Biedermeier and Vormärz, these watercolours attest to the complex stylistic simultaneity of neo-classicism and realism. They are unique documents of the evolution of landscape painting during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The exhibition highlights 150 masterpieces from the important collection of Archduke John, which is still owned by his descendants and has now been made accessible to the public on such a large scale for the first time.

The exhibition also presents several exemplary models of agricultural implements.

Biography

Archduke John of Austria (1782–1859)

1782 Archduke John was born in Florence on 20 January as the thirteenth child of Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany and his wife, Maria Luisa of Spain. His father's enlightened spirit and his interest in the natural sciences provided the basic prerequisites for the prince's education and determined his future career.

1790 John's father succeeded Joseph II as Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II. From now on, the family lived at the court in Vienna.

1792 After his father's sudden death, John's eldest brother Francis ascended the throne. Archduke John was trained for a military career and educated in jurisprudence. In 1798 he came under the spell of the Swiss historian Johannes von Müller and the latter's patriotically informed national historiography.

1800 As the imperial army's formal commander-in-chief in the War of the Second Coalition against France, Archduke John suffered a critical defeat in the Battle of Hohenlinden.

1801 Archduke John was appointed director general of the Engineering and Fortification Service and was thus responsible for fortifications throughout the empire. He undertook extensive military journeys, which led him to Tyrol as early as 1800.

1805 The Treaty of Pressburg, according to which Tyrol had to be ceded to Bavaria, put a preliminary end to the archduke's love of Tyrol and concomitant ambitions. In 1808, John organised the creation of a national militia for Tyrol and Inner Austria. Whereas the emperor and Prince Metternich primarily sought to reach a compromise with France, John was convinced that the Alpine lands should resist Napoleon and participated in the preparations of a rebellion. After the so-called 'Affair of the Alpine League' was exposed in 1812/13, John was banished from Tyrol and only allowed to return in 1833.

1810 Following the setbacks suffered in Tyrol, John focused on Styria. Although his brother, Emperor Francis II (I), did not entrust him with any high-ranking administrative functions, the archduke launched a comprehensive set of reforms. He complemented his pronounced interest in the natural sciences with practical knowledge, which he acquired as a farmer, winegrower, and industrialist. This became possible through the purchase of Brandhof manor near Mariazell (1818), which he turned into a model farm, the operation of a blast furnace at Vordernberg (from 1822 on), and the acquisition of a vineyard near Marburg (1822).

1811 Archduke John founded the Joanneum as a 'National Museum of Inner Austria'. Until well into the 1830s, numerous other institutions that were intended to use scientific knowledge for the improvement of people's daily life followed, including the Society of Agriculture (1819), a savings bank (1825), or the Society for the Promotion of Industry and Trade in Inner Austria (1837).

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1819 Archduke John met Anna Plochl, the daughter of the postmaster of Aussee. It was not before 1829 that Emperor Francis II (I) sanctioned their marriage. The story about the true love of the 'Prince of Styria' for the postmaster's daughter is one of the most well-known chapters in the archduke's life and still makes him one of the most popular figures of the Habsburg dynasty in the nineteenth century.

1839 Birth of son Francis, who in 1845 received the title 'Count of Merano'.

1840 Archduke John acquired prestigious residences for his family. He purchased Stainz Castle in Western Styria in 1840, had a large palace built in Graz in 1841, and bought Schenna Castle near Merano in 1844.

1848 Impressed by his high standing, the all-German Frankfurt National Assembly elected Archduke John their regent. He resigned from this office after only one year.

1859 Archduke John died in Graz on 10 May. He was initially buried in the mausoleum of Emperor Ferdinand II in Graz and eventually found his final resting place in the family tomb at Schenna near Merano in 1869.

Johann Kniep (1779–1809)

There is only scarce biographical information about the life of Johann Kniep, which lasted hardly thirty years. He was born son to a metalworker in Vienna in 1779 and from 1793 on studied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts in the landscape class headed by Johann Christian Brand and Friedrich August Brand. Early documents of Kniep's activities as a topographical painter and printmaker expose him as a direct follower of such vedutists as Carl Schütz, Johann Ziegler, and Laurenz Jansch, the latter of whom held the position of corrector at the Academy.

In 1802, Kniep became Archduke John's first chamber painter, and he was also the first artist to accompany the prince on his journeys through Styria. Some thirty watercolours by Kniep of topographical views of Styria have survived in the collection of the archduke's descendants. Most of these works depict landscapes, the majority of which were made in Upper Styria. It is possible to assign them to specific journeys and thus to date them thanks to the entries in John's journal. They served as cultural and geographical records and were supposed to illustrate a statistical and topographical work about Inner Austria Archduke John intended to publish.

Johann Kniep also accompanied the archduke on two military missions: to Carniola, Venetia, and Lombardy in 1804 and to the coast of Croatia, Trieste, the Val Canale, and Carinthia in 1806. The pictures documenting these journeys were originally compiled in two albums and eventually ended up on the art market.

Johann Kniep died in Vienna on 30 July 1809. The death certificate mentioned 'nervous fever' as the cause of his death. The artist created altogether about 200 works for his patron.

The Chamber Painters' First Mission

Johann Kniep's earliest works for Archduke John date from a journey undertaken in 1802. Most of them depict places in the Mur and Mürz Valleys. They constituted the visual equivalent to a 'Description of the Customs and Political Situation of the Inhabitants in the Valley of Neuberg in the Mürz Valley in Styria', plans for which Archduke John pursued intensively from 1810 onwards, but which would never be published. Although Kniep's works for the archduke were made within the short period of six years, they show his artistic progress and a growing understanding of his patron's ideas. Whereas the first depictions seem rather schematic and monotonous in terms of colour, his later works are dominated by a more natural palette and more generously conceived landscape views. In spite of the documentary accuracy of his renderings, Kniep, through his handling of light and colour, arrived at a romanticisation or even transfiguration of nature, which seems intact and unspoilt. In this, the chamber painter empathised with his patron's sentiments and ideals.

Karl Ruß (1779–1843)

Karl Ruß was born to Bohemian parents in the Viennese suburb of Laimgrube on 11 August 1779. His extraordinary artistic talent was recognised early, and so he received lessons in painting and drawing from various teachers. In 1794 he was admitted to the class of history painter Hubert Maurer at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. During his studies, which lasted until 1810, he was repeatedly awarded scholarships. Filled with patriotic fervour, he increasingly devoted himself to history painting. Moreover, he sought to renew portraiture and also explored printmaking techniques.

Archduke John's attention was drawn to the young artist by the latter's history painting *Hecuba*, and he engaged him as his second chamber painter to succeed Johann Kniep. Between 1810 and 1818, Ruß accompanied his patron on journeys through the Alpine lands. His primary task was to meticulously document the native costumes of the various regions. His series of thirty-five illustrations of traditional garments, which are well-known through reproductions on postcards, is still an extremely informative source in terms of ethnography and costume history. Entries in the archduke's journal suggest that the relationship between the two men, who were almost of the same age, was quite close. They talked about history, the ancients and modern people, and 'the general laws of the universe'.

In 1818, Ruß, thanks to Archduke John's recommendation, was appointed junior custodian of the Belvedere, the imperial and royal picture gallery; in 1821 he rose to the position of senior custodian and had to resign as a chamber painter due to his professional career. He held the function of custodian until his death on 19 September 1843.

The Exoticism of Styrian Costumes

Within the framework of the archduke's demographic survey of Styria, pictures of traditional native costumes were considered indispensable. More than thirty such depictions of traditional dresses date from Karl Ruß's period as a chamber painter to Archduke John. In his monumental and static documentations of traditional costumes, the focus is on the figures and their garments. The figures distinctly appear in the foreground in typical poses and attires. They seem isolated, and most of them directly face the beholder; some are rendered in profile or as back views, probably in order to highlight special ornaments or cuts. Although the surrounding landscape is of secondary importance, some of the watercolours contain topographical details that facilitate regional classification.

By accepting this commission, Karl Ruß, a trained history painter, ventured into uncharted territory. Although depicting 'ordinary people', the artist catered to his patron's sense of idealisation. Through accurate modelling, sharp outlines, and isolated positions, Ruß lent poise and dignity to his figures. They embody the straightforward life of country people as a valuable alternative worthy of protection to the arbitrariness and indifference of life in the metropolis.

Jakob Gauermann (1773–1843)

Jakob Gauermann was born son to a local carpenter without means in Öffingen near Stuttgart on 3 September 1773. He cherished the wish to become a painter early in his life. When he was hardly thirteen years old, his father sent him to a cousin in Hohenheim who worked as a stonemason for Duke Charles Eugene of Württemberg. Gauermann initially worked as an unskilled assistant and later was taken in as an apprentice. Despite the hard work he regularly drew in his spare time and finally, thanks to the help of a chamberlain, was allowed to attend Charles Academy in Stuttgart as the duke's stipendiary. However, he was not trained there as a painter as he had wished so dearly, but as a copper engraver and printer, so that he voluntarily left the school in 1792.

His first works, dating from 1794, were made for Carl Lang, an early patron and publisher in Heilbronn. Lang also enabled him to travel to Vienna and complete his education as an artist. His patron having gone bankrupt, Gauermann earned his living as a printmaker and drawing teacher. He had his first success in 1809, when he contributed to topographical compilations of culturally and historically significant *vedute* edited by Comte Alexandre de Laborde.

In 1811, Gauermann accompanied Archduke John on a journey through Styria for the first time. It marked the beginning of his prolific work for the 'Prince of Styria', who initially commissioned him with the execution of 'Styrian prospects'. In 1818 he was appointed chamber painter and received a regular salary. He held this position until his death in 1843. Gauermann executed some 200 works for John, two thirds of which were landscapes and one third of which comprised figural subject matter.

'Styrian Prospects'

When Archduke John founded the 'Joanneum National Museum of Inner Austria' in Graz in 1811, he simultaneously intensified his efforts to compile a comprehensive statistical description of Styria. Jakob Gauermann was to contribute to the project with his pictorial documents.

Given a commission of that kind, one would expect sober and realistic records of the land and its people. However, the state of art development was not yet ready for such an approach: Jakob Gauermann, too, was still bound by the patterns of ideal landscape painting on the one hand and by those of the art of *vedute* on the other. Moreover, the archduke's expectations went beyond a mere documentation. The pictures, besides rendering topographical conditions, should also express his romanticised view of 'the Alps' and of 'the mountain people'. Gauermann had already presented idealised landscape descriptions in his earlier works. When he was commissioned with executing 'Styrian prospects' in 1811, he was predestined for the task, which he performed entirely in the spirit Archduke John had in mind. However, in the case of representations of industrial plants or manufacturing workshops, the archduke was rather interested in an accurate depiction of their facilities. Gauermann's works devoted to such subject matter are therefore more austere.

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Studies and Sketches

Apart from Jakob Gauermann's highly finished watercolours, the collection of Archduke John also comprises numerous drawings by his hand. Most of them are preparatory compositional studies by which the process of pictorial invention can be traced extremely well. Moreover, the artist frequently noted down on his drawings made in preparation for watercolours for whom they were made and when. Together with the *œuvre catalogue* compiled by the artist himself, these sheets allow us to date his works and learn more about his clientele.

Gauermann frequently initially sketched his motifs with red chalk and then swiftly defined the outlines in pen and brown ink. Eventually he applied delicate washes, using the paper ground to create highlights and enliven his works. The grid of pencil lines underneath was meant to facilitate transfer to the surface of the future watercolour. Because of the artist's great mastery of this Late Baroque wash technique, these compositional studies certainly number among the artist's most accomplished works.

Matthäus Loder (1781–1828)

Matthäus Loder was born son to an upholsterer and decorator in Vienna on 31 May 1781. In 1795 he entered the porcelain factory's school for flower painters. However, thanks to the support of his professors Heinrich Friedrich Füger and Hubert Maurer, he was soon able to switch to the painting and sculpture class at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, where he studied until 1810. He designed theatre sets and shop decorations early in his career and also worked for publishing houses, delivering caricatures and illustrations for books and greeting cards. Additionally, he was trained in 'conversational painting'.

In 1813, when Loder joined Archduke John's entourage for the first time on an inspection tour of the region around Bruck, the artist captured industrial and rural working environments. A short time later he was offered the honourable position of drawing master to Marie-Louise, Napoleon's wife. In spring 1816 he accompanied her to the court of Parma and visited Florence and Livorno, but was forced to resign for health reasons towards the end of the year.

The invitation to succeed his friend Karl Ruß in the service of Archduke John turned out to be a lucky coincidence. His patron's wish to document the Alpine regions and the simplicity of local life brought 'realistic' content to Loder's art, which originally had been purely decorative: he created works entirely in the spirit of John's ideas. Eventually, Loder became the chronicler of the archduke's love story. In the years to come, his diligence and sensitivity ensured that the archduke preferred him to Jakob Gauer mann.

In autumn 1827, Loder fell seriously ill and died on 14 September 1828. He was buried at Vordernberg, where he and his wife had spent many summers in the archduke's office building. He left his artistic estate to Archduke John.

The Iron Industry in Styria

When Archduke John embarked on an inspection tour to the mining town of Eisenerz in 1813, Matthäus Loder was part of his entourage for the first time. He was expected to supply lacking pictorial material for the archduke's statistical survey of Styria. The artist made a large number of sketches of working environments. Over the years he translated them into watercolours that can be regarded as the earliest pictorial documents of the Styrian iron industry. Initially, this task confronted the young history painter, who had previously only created graceful, slightly mannered book illustrations and chivalric idylls, with unusual subject matter. But he soon adopted a new pictorial language by which he described the audacity of technology and work processes true to detail. Workmen play a subordinate role in these pictures. The artist did carefully sketch them in his preliminary studies, but in the finished works they only appear as tiny, marginalised staffage or as figures viewed from behind.

Although Archduke John deplored the social misery of the rural population and contributed considerably to the improvement of their labour conditions, physical exertion and the hardships of breadwinning were not considered worth depicting in the visual arts. The work of pitmen, furnace tenders, and timbermen was placed on an equal footing with that of hunters, fishermen, farmers, and herders and regarded as natural and God-given.

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Life on Mountain Pastures

In addition to the iron and timber industries – timber was of immense importance when it came to smelting ore – Loder's patron also expected the artist to document livestock and dairy farming, hunting, fishery, transport, rural housing, tools and garments, and even games and pastime activities in the region around Bruck. Starting in 1817, the artist followed an itinerary Archduke John had planned for him. He drew the equipment and gear of woodcutters, hunters, fishermen, and peasants and observed dairymaids making butter. Back in Vienna, he eventually used his sketches to compose valuable documents in the form of highly delicate and detailed watercolours. The renderings of rare brickwork huts on the high mountain alp near Aflenz or a huge masonry fireplace in the interior of Engelmann's Cabin on Sonnschienalm are still of huge ethnographic value.

Loder also supplied depictions of traditional costumes. Different from the works by Ruß devoted to this theme, Loder's figures are not anonymous, but are rendered in a portrait-like fashion. In this way, the artist endowed his 'documents' with anecdotal charm.

Archduke John and Anna Plochl: Forbidden Love

Year after year, Archduke John visited the Aussee region, where he encountered like-minded people among the villagers and officials. When he returned in August 1819, his friends sent four young girls in festive costumes to welcome him on the shore of Lake Toplitz and accompany him to Lake Grundl. They boarded a boat that would take them across the water to Ladner's Inn.

Anna Plochl, the Aussee postmaster's daughter, then not even fifteen years old, was a member of the welcoming committee. John would not leave her side. He courted her discreetly and unhappily bade his farewell: not only the insurmountable difference in their social standing, but also his financial situation seemed to rule out their union entirely.

The situation changed in 1822 when Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen left John a legacy of 200.000 guilders. The money enabled the archduke to purchase a blast furnace at Vordernberg. Now the owner of a smeltery, a home, forests, and farmyards, he would be able to offer Anna a reputable bourgeois existence, and so he asked for her hand in marriage in August at Irdning. With the emperor's permission, the wedding was planned to take place at Strechau Castle in spring 1823. But the Viennese court vehemently resisted and John was forced to refrain from marriage. All he could do was to offer Anna a home on his estates as a 'housekeeper' from autumn 1823 on. It took the emperor six years to relent, and the wedding could take place in clandestine on Brandhof manor in 1829.

Snapshots from the Life of Archduke John

In addition to describing the love story of Archduke John and Anna Plochl, Loder rendered many episodes from the archduke's life he had witnessed as a constant companion of the prince. For example, he documented a game of ice-stock shooting on Lake Leopoldstein or sudden snowfall at Vordernberg in May 1826.

From 1824 on, the archduke invited Loder and his wife to spend the summers in the mansion of his hammer mill, where Anna Plochl lived as a 'housekeeper'. The archduke regularly dined

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with the 'righteous Loders' in the evenings and praised the couple as an 'example of love and loyalty'.

Loder also captured hunting excursions, which numbered among John's greatest pleasures, and mountain tours for his patron in so-called 'souvenir sheets'. These works also comprised anecdotal descriptions, such as *Descent from Mount Ankogel*, which relates to a tour made in 1826. While descending the mountain, the prince and his huntsmen had used their coats to slide downhill in the snow. We can see Loder – wearing a tailcoat and top hat as usual – skidding towards the valley together with his master. This seems confusing, for in reality the painter had stayed behind at a hut in order to be able to draw the scene. Moreover, his lung disease would have stopped the painter from accompanying the prince on his daring glissade.

In Bright Light: Archduke John's Orderly Estates

The chamber painter's tasks increased when the prince commissioned him to paint his estates for his souvenir albums. The series was introduced with a picture of the Brandhof and its new stables. Matthäus Loder knew how to perfectly accommodate his artistic skills to Archduke John's world of ideas. Unlike the works by Jakob Gauer mann, about which the archduke criticised many things as having been done 'extremely sloppily', Loder's drawings stand out for their unrivalled meticulousness.

He not only depicted buildings, paths, fences, and seedbeds, but also garments and equipment with painstaking accuracy, although the motifs were frequently not larger than a few millimetres. By resorting to the effect of 'micropsia', according to which objects located farther away are rendered with a sharpness that would actually suggest great nearness, he evaded the laws of perspective. In this way, the objects depicted appear in crystalline clarity as far as the background.

At the same time, Loder developed a broad repertory of formulaic set pieces he used for trees, forests, rocks, or water. The staffage is reminiscent of the delicate and elegant figures in his book illustrations. Instead of the pastoral scenes typical of such idylls, Loder frequently depicted the romantic couple: Archduke John as a huntsman and Anna Plochl as a dairymaid or gardener.

Waterfalls: Gastein and Alpine Idylls

'His seriousness is my best companion,' Archduke John wrote into his diary when he sojourned in Gastein with Matthäus Loder in August 1826. They frequently rode across the country in an open one-horse carriage to the cheers of the people. Loder must have felt honoured and stimulated to be part of the popular prince's immediate entourage.

During the four weeks of their stay, the chamber painter accompanied his patron on excursions to mountain peaks, mining plants, and lookouts in the spectacular Alpine region. There the artist prepared his superb views of landscapes he would finish over the winter or in subsequent years.

In order to do justice to the unusual motifs of gorges and waterfalls, Loder gave up pure watercolour painting and experimented with bodycolour on dyed paper, developing formulas for fizzy water and hazy spume. However, the spa town's impressive location also required

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new compositional solutions. If Loder had attached secondary importance to the foreground in his earlier works, he frequently neglected it completely in the pictures painted in Gastein, declaring the distant panorama his sole subject matter. When the artist's patron mentioned in his journal that now one could finally perceive 'truth' in these landscapes, this referred not only to the accuracy of realistic detail. Rather, the sublimation of the mountain landscape into an idealised idyll corresponded to a reality that solely existed in the archduke's view of the world.

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Thomas Ender (1793–1875)

Thomas Ender was born son to Johann Ender, a man of humble origins, in Vienna's suburb of St. Ulrich on 3 November 1793. In 1806 he enrolled at the Vienna Academy, where he studied under Hubert Maurer, Laurenz Jansch, and Josef Mössmer. Prince Metternich, who in 1810 was appointed president of the Academy, soon became his patron and enabled him to participate in the Austrian expedition to Brazil in 1817/18 as a pictorial chronicler, to accompany Emperor Francis I on his journey to Italy in 1819, and to accept a four-year scholarship in Rome.

After the death of Matthäus Loder in 1828, Ender succeeded him as a chamber painter. In 1829 he travelled to Archduke John's estates in Styria; he painted in the surroundings of Aussee and accompanied his patron to Gastein and on several mountain tours. With his realistic renderings of glaciers in Salzburg, the Venediger Group, and the Grossglockner, he reached a new dimension in landscape painting that would help shape the image of the Alps around the globe. From 1833 onwards, Ender increasingly travelled by himself and supplied detailed accounts of his journeys in his letters to Archduke John. He concentrated on the depiction of Inner Austria's most beautiful scenery, primarily of the Alpine regions of Salzburg and Tyrol, and in 1837 joined the archduke on a diplomatic journey to the Crimea, Constantinople, and Greece. That same year Ender was appointed professor at the Academy of Fine Arts.

The Revolution of 1848 put an end to the chamber painters' project and to Ender's professorship. The artist died in Vienna on 28 September 1875. The works he created for Archduke John over a period of more than twenty years – some 500, which makes him the artist most amply represented in this collection – number among his chief masterpieces.

Archduke John's Country Estates

When Thomas Ender was appointed chamber painter, the idea originally pursued by Archduke John to systematically document Styria shifted out of focus. The artist primarily devoted himself to regions in Styria in the context of the archduke's estates, painting a series of watercolours showing Brandhof manor and such natural monuments in its environs as the Seeberg Alp. When Archduke John inherited a substantial sum of money from Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen, he was in a position to purchase yet another estate in Styria: in 1822 he acquired a vineyard in Pickern near Marburg that would eventually become a model wine farm with a lasting impact on winegrowing in Styria, and in 1827 he had a stately mansion built there. In 1840, John fulfilled his long-cherished wish to possess a country estate near Graz when he bought the former monastery of the Augustinian Canons at Stainz in Western Styria. It became the family residence proper of the Counts of Merano, the archduke's descendants. And having purchased Schenna Castle near Merano in 1845, Archduke John eventually also owned an estate in Tyrol. There he found his final resting place in a mausoleum begun in 1860 in the style of Gothic Revival, after his mortal remains had been transferred from Graz.

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The Brandhof: Feudal Manor and a Common Sense of Order

The Brandhof near Mariazell became Archduke John's most important country estate. He purchased the former farmstead on 22 July 1818 and turned it into a model farm adapted to the rough conditions prevalent in Upper Styria.

Having received a large sum of money from the legacy of his uncle, Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen, who had been the founder of the Albertina, he began enlarging and elaborately furnishing the manor in 1822. John engaged Daniel Böhm to decorate the dining room with statues of Habsburg ancestors, including Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol (who was married to Philippine Welser and took a fate similar to that of Archduke John with Anna Plochl), Archduke Charles of Inner Austria, Maximilian I, and Rudolf I. The main group shows Emperor Leopold II blessing his son, Emperor Francis I, at centre. The glass windows were manufactured by Anton Kothgasser based on designs by Matthäus Loder and depicted the archduke's country estates. The hunting room was also decorated with sumptuous glass paintings, which were executed by Gottlob Samuel Mohn. Jakob Gauermaun and Ludwig Ferdinand Schnorr von Carolsfeld had supplied the designs in the form of scenes devoted to daily work routines in the country and the world of industry. Moreover, the hunting room contained portraits of the emperors Francis II (I) and Maximilian I and of Andreas Hofer. That scenes related to John's biography and to country and work life were integrated into the decoration of Brandhof manor can be considered as truly innovative.

***En plein air*: Painting in Nature**

When Matthäus Loder died in autumn 1828, Thomas Ender, by then already a renowned artist, followed in his footsteps as chamber painter to Archduke John. Initially entrusted with the unusual task of completing the projects Loder had left behind unfinished, he went about the first independent works for his new patron in the spring of 1829. In the summers he joined John's entourage as Loder had done before him and travelled to Gastein, the archduke's favourite summer resort and starting point for numerous mountain tours. Ender accompanied John on many excursions, such as to the festive inauguration of the mountain hut on Gamskarkogel the archduke had had built on its summit plateau. He painted numerous views of Gastein and its surroundings during his years as a chamber painter. Whereas the early idyllic view of the *English Coffeehouse* conveys a lively impression of tourism in Gastein during the Biedermeier period, Ender's later works distinctly reveal his orientation towards pure landscape painting that would dominate his future work for Archduke John. The view from the Kree-Törl into the Großarl Valley, with its inscriptions at the upper margin, proves how faithfully the artist managed to render the topography of places.

The Great Venetian: Exploring the Eternal Ice

In August 1828, Archduke John, who would go down in history as a 'pioneer of alpinism in the Eastern Alps', started the daring attempt to ascend to the summit of the Grossvenediger or Great Venetian. The undertaking failed only 300 metres below the peak, when an avalanche swept away the guide of the group. The mountain was first climbed only years later, in 1841, yet without the participation of Archduke John. The unconquered mountain fascinated the

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archduke. It was thus one of Ender's primary tasks at the very beginning of his employment as a chamber painter to capture the Venediger mountain range on paper. He created impressive pictures of this Alpine region, which together with his works made in the surroundings of Gastein number among his earliest depictions of glaciers. Archduke John took an extreme liking to these works, for they not only displayed the beauty of the Austrian mountain world, but were also associated by him with personal adventures. It was probably not least because of these pictures of the Grossvenediger that he decided to take Ender along on his next major expedition. It would lead them to the Glockner group and mark a first climax in Ender's artistic development as a chamber painter.

On the Grossglockner: A Steady Flow of Viscous Ice

Archduke John's enthusiasm as a mountaineer was by no means curbed by his failed endeavour of the first ascent of the Great Venetian: in 1832 followed the attempt to conquer the Glockner Group. John set out from Heiligenblut on 8 August 1832 with Thomas Ender as a member of his large team, and they walked through the Möll Valley towards Kaprun. They broke off their expedition near Mount Schwarzköpfl and did not climb the 'tall, wide dome of ice whose name was unknown to everyone,' as Archduke John remarked. This firn-capped peak closing the Pasterze glacier in the background was finally named 'Johannisberg' or 'Mount Johannis' by the botanist David Heinrich Hoppe in honour of the archduke and his attempt at summiting it for the first time. It thus still recalls the famous alpinist from the House of Habsburg.

The pictures of glaciers Ender painted during this pioneering expedition mark a first zenith of the artist's work for Archduke John. In their painterly representation of reality, they demonstrate Ender's mastery of landscape art. There is hardly another picture by the artist's hand that became so famous as that of Mount Grossglockner and the Pasterze. The artist repeated the motif in numerous further versions in watercolour and oil, and together with his views of the Venediger Group it numbers among the earliest realistic renderings of Alpine land.

The Grandeur of Tyrol's Mountains

Archduke John felt deeply attached to Tyrol, which he visited regularly from 1801 onwards as director general of the Engineering and Fortification Service. When it was stipulated in the Treaty of Pressburg that Tyrol had to be ceded to Bavaria and the archduke became involved with the rebellious 'Alpine League', Prince Metternich banished him from Tyrol, only lifting the ban in 1833. Tyrol immediately re-entered the focus of the archduke's interest and also offered a new field of activity for Thomas Ender, his chamber painter. The latter's intensive exploration of Tyrol began with a journey to South Tyrol in 1839. Tyrol would remain the dominant subject during his further career as a chamber painter. Ender once again devoted himself primarily to the Alpine regions and glaciers and always sought to execute his views in front of nature as far as this was possible. Given the changeable weather conditions, this was not always an easy undertaking. A particularly impressive work is the more than six-feet-long panorama Ender managed to complete out of doors in the Stubai Valley, thanks to a

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stretch of seventeen days of good weather. Through his preoccupation with Tyrol, Ender soon shared Archduke John's enthusiasm: 'Tyrol has become so dear to me as if I were a native Tyrolean; no one can feel a deeper yearning for the mountains of this beautiful land than I.'

Salzburg: Discovery of the Picturesque

When Thomas Ender travelled to Salzburg for the first time in 1811, the view of the Salzburg mountains left a deep impression on him and kindled his passion for painting the Alps: 'This land, which is so rich in picturesque images, inspired me with its great mountain scenery, so that I believe that it was only there that I learned how to see nature first,' he later wrote in his autobiography. His views of Salzburg were crucial in the Prince of Metternich's becoming his first important patron and protector.

The newly chosen chamber painter also travelled through Salzburg for Archduke John. First came the views of Gastein and its surroundings, which the artist painted on hiking excursions and mountain tours that were mostly undertaken in the archduke's company. From the 1830s on, Ender increasingly set out by himself. Until 1842, before his interest shifted entirely to Tyrol, he painted numerous Salzburg views for the archduke, including those on display of the City of Salzburg and of Werfen, Radstadt, and Saalfelden. They demonstrate that Ender considered the landscape his primary subject matter also in his townscapes.

The Crimea: Fascination of a Foreign World

In the summer of 1837, Ender was working on a series of views of the Danube when he received the archduke's order to travel to Odessa and accompany him on a diplomatic mission to the Crimean peninsula, Turkey, and Greece as a pictorial chronicler. Ender instantly interrupted his study trip, returned to Vienna, and boarded a ship for Galați. Landing on the Crimea with some delay, he met with the archduke on 23 September and immediately began drawing Sevastopol and its environs. He also documented the archduke's excursions, including a visit with the Russian imperial family to Bakhchysarai, an outing to the medieval city-fortress of Chufut-Kale, and the ascent of Chatyr-Dag. On 29 September the delegation reached Yalta on the southern coast of the Crimean peninsula, where the steamer 'Marianne', the most modern ship of the imperial and royal navy, was waiting for them. From there, they headed for the Bosphorus on 1 October. When a violent storm approached during the night from 2 to 3 October, the ship and its crew escaped catastrophe by a hair's breadth. Ender captured the incident in a watercolour that can hardly be surpassed in terms of drama. The ship arrived in Constantinople heavily damaged and required thorough overhauling. While Archduke John devoted himself to his diplomatic business, Ender painted numerous vistas, including a detailed panorama with a stunning view of the Galata district and the Golden Horn towards the old town, which probably is the most impressive work in this series.

The Acropolis: Crown of the Occident

On 18 October, the 'Marianne' left Constantinople. Sailing via Smyrna (Izmir) and Syra (Syros), the ship arrived in Athens, where it was put under quarantine. Making use of the time, the delegation undertook a boat trip to the Isthmus of Corinth and visited Acrocorinth. When the quarantine was lifted on 1 November, they explored Athens. Archduke John was deeply impressed at the sight of the Acropolis: 'It was hard for me to part with the Parthenon, which is the most beautiful antique monument Athens and Greece has to offer, in addition to all those other things the Acropolis contains, as well as its terrific location, with a view of the port of Piraeus and the sea in the distance.' Ender painted numerous vistas, documenting the state of the ancient citadel before it was excavated further and reconstructed in the later nineteenth century.

The journey back home led along the Dalmatian coast towards Trieste, where the entire delegation was forced to remain in quarantine for a whole month. Ender used the time to complete the watercolours begun during their stay on the Crimean peninsula. More than 220 works from this memorable journey have survived in Archduke John's collection. Cultural and historical documents, they are particularly charming due to the virtuoso watercolour technique Ender employed to capture a great diversity of motifs in characteristic light atmospheres.

South Tyrol: Final Mission

The first journey to South Tyrol Ender undertook for Archduke John in 1839 left a lasting impression on him. Judging from his detailed letters to his patron, he was enchanted by the vegetation and adored the fertile plains, beautiful vineyards, and unusual rock formations.

During his trips undertaken in the summers and autumns of the following years, he painted numerous views of towns, mountain passes, and the picturesquely located palaces, castles, and ruins so typical of the South Tyrolean landscape. His watercolours distinctly show how Ender increasingly used vigorous and more intensive colours, preferably brown and green tones; his brushwork became more painterly, and the size of his works grew larger. They clearly betray the hand of an accomplished artist at the acme of his career who masterfully handled the watercolour technique.

A panorama of Lake Garda painted in 1847, during the artist's last journey for his patron, is a very special document. It marks the end of the chamber painter's highly productive activity in the service of Archduke John, which the artist programmatically summed up in an account to his employer: 'It has been my task to record all of it, and I consider myself fortunate to have been allowed to conserve beauty [...] through my ambitious art for you, my lord, in pictures of the future.'

The Collection of Models of Agricultural Implements

Today's Universalmuseum Joanneum, which was originally installed by Archduke John of Austria, keeps numerous collections, most of which can be traced back to the archduke's donations or were encouraged by him. This also holds true for the collection of models of agricultural implements. In order to promote new technologies and methods in agriculture and facilitate the improvement of machinery and tools, Archduke John recommended the construction of state-of-the-art models. They were built by members of the Society of Agriculture, an institution founded by the archduke in 1819. These models were easy to transport and should visualise technological innovation, including the insights the archduke had gained on a study tour to England and the Netherlands in 1815/16.

Today the collection of agricultural implements is preserved in the Museum of Agriculture at Stainz Castle, together with a collection of specimens of seeds and fruit.