
SCHLOSS AMBRAS INNSBRUCK



TERRIBLY BEAUTIFUL 2.0

SPECIAL EXHIBITION
22 JUNE TO 31 OCTOBER 2023

What does the terrifying Head of Medusa have to do with the beautiful corals from the depths of the sea? And although they have largely been forgotten today, where do the fantastic hybrid creatures come from whose bodies are both human and animal? Their shapes make us shudder; yet at the same time we admire the beauty of their artistic expression and execution.

The Fascination of the Unknown: This year's special exhibition at Ambras Castle Innsbruck *Terribly Beautiful 2.0 – Monstrosities in Art* is dedicated to sinister beings, demons and hybrid creatures down several centuries. The exhibition, which will run from 22 June to 31 October 2023, traces the meaning and symbolism of the mysterious, and often millennia-old, myths that lie behind them.

Good or Evil? Our perception of mythical figures and mysterious lore changes constantly and our interpretations of them evolve accordingly. Even today, genres such as crime, thrillers, fantasy and horror still captivate us with suspense and morbid thrills. Visitors will marvel at the sight of devils, Medusa, griffons and the stories behind them on a tour of Ambras Upper Castle. They will love the fantastic paintings, precious items made of gold and rare natural objects displayed in the rooms where the special exhibition is on show.

Terribly Beautiful 2.0 revives and adds a new twist to the highly successful exhibition held as part of the KHM Museumsverband's INTERMEZZO series in 2011. Prominence is also given to heart-stopping tales of death and the devil as well as the *Amraser Matschgerer*, which in 2020 were inscribed in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Austria.

IMAGE:
HANS LEINBERGER, *TÖDLEIN*, VOR 1519.
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THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE BEASTLY

The terribly beautiful works of art presented in the special exhibition 2023 at Ambras Castle Innsbruck – such as paintings, sculptures, gold work, and armour – have been borrowed from the Castle's own holdings, various collections of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna (Egyptian and Near Eastern Collection, the Collection of Greek and Roman Antiquities, the Kunstammer, the Imperial Armoury, the Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, the Picture Gallery, Coin Collection and the Library) as well as from selected lenders.

“Apart from the only surviving portrait of *Vlad Tepes*, also known as *Dracula*, and Peter Paul Rubens' famous *Head of Medusa*, the star of the exhibition is the small, delicate and yet incredibly lively sculpture carved from a single piece of wood by Hans Leinberger: the *Ambraser Tödlein*.” (Veronika Sandbichler, Director)



TÖDLEIN (LITTLE DEATH)

Hans Leinberger, before 1519

Pearwood

H. 22,5 cm

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HAUPT DER MEDUSA (HEAD OF MEDUSA)

Peter Paul Rubens, 1617/19

Oil on canvas

H. 60.6 cm, W. 112 cm (unframed)

© MORAVIAN GALLERY IN BRNO, PETER PAUL RUBENS, HEAD OF MEDUSA



VLAD III. TEPES (Dracula)

Germany, 2nd half of the 16th century

Oil on canvas

H. 60 cm, W. 50 cm

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THE DRAGON SLAYING THE COMPANIONS OF CADMUS

Hendrick Goltzius, after 1588

Oil on copper

H. 16 cm, W. 22 cm

© KHM-MUSEUMSVERBAND



VANITAS HEAD (MEMENTO-MORI)

1st half of the 17th century

Ivory

H. 4.8 cm, W. 4.3 cm, D. 4.3 cm

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INFORMATION FOR THE VISIT

Terribly Beautiful 2.0

22 June to 31 October 2023

Daily from 10 am to 5 pm

Admission price

Adults

€ 16

Reduced

€ 12

Children & teens under the age of 19

free of charge

Guided tours & Audio Guide

Guided tour through the exhibition (EN)

on request

Audio Guide

€ 4 p.p. plus admission

ENQUIRIES

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