

## The Habsburgs: Rarely Seen Masterpieces from Europe’s Greatest Dynasty Opens February 15, 2015 At the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

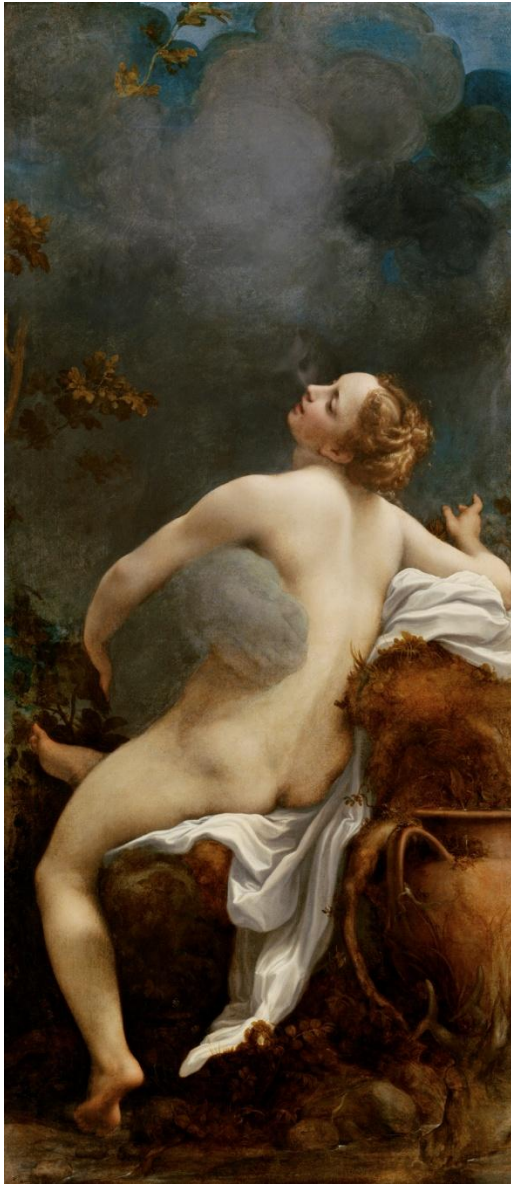
Watch a new MIA [video](#) featuring recent footage from Vienna’s *Kunsthistorisches Museum*



Attributed to Balthasar Moll, Carousel Sleigh, c. 1740/50, Gilded wood, metal, velvet, braids Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien

January 12, 2015 – A major exhibition of masterworks amassed by one of the longest-reigning European dynasties is opening in February at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA). “The Habsburgs: Rarely Seen Masterpieces from Europe’s Greatest Dynasty” showcases masterpieces and rare objects from the collection of the Habsburg Dynasty—the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire and other powerful rulers who commissioned extraordinary artworks now in the collection of the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna. The exhibition, largely composed of works that have never traveled outside of Austria, will be on view February 15 to May 10, 2015 at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) and will then travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

“The Habsburgs: Rarely Seen Masterpieces from Europe’s Greatest Dynasty” explores the dramatic rise and fall of the Habsburgs’ global empire, from their political ascendance in the late Middle Ages to the height of their power in the 16th and 17th centuries, the expansion of the dynasty in the 18th and 19th centuries to its decline in 1918 at the end of World War I. The 93 artworks and artifacts that tell the story include arms and armor, sculpture, Greek and Roman antiquities, court costumes, carriages, decorative art objects, and paintings by such masters as Correggio, Giorgione, Rubens, Tintoretto, Titian, and Velázquez.



Antonio Allegri, called Correggio, 1489/94-1534  
*Jupiter and Io*, c. 1530, 162 x 73.5 cm  
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien

Key masterpieces that have never before traveled to the United States include:

- *The Crowning with Thorns* (c. 1602/1604) by Caravaggio
- A portrait of Jane Seymour (1536), Queen of England and third wife to Henry VIII, by Hans Holbein the Younger
- *Jupiter and Io* (c. 1530/32) by Correggio.

“The Habsburgs is an unprecedented presentation and wide-ranging survey of the Habsburg Dynasty, a true visual feast,” said Kaywin Feldman, the Duncan and Nivan MacMillan director and president of the MIA and hosting curator. “By bringing together the Habsburgs’ paintings, decorative arts, costumes, and armor, we can give our visitors a rich, tangible, and fascinating sense of the lives and legacies of these important European rulers who shaped world history.”

“We’re delighted to share our Museum’s unique wonders with our American friends,” added Sabine Haag, general director of Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. “The exhibition will show the extraordinary scope of the Habsburgs’ collections, including masterpieces of Roman antiquity, medieval armory, early modern painting and craftwork, as well as gorgeous carriages and clothing. We hope this will inspire visitors to make the trip to Vienna to see the collection in person and to discover even more of our treasure.”

The exhibition chronicles the Habsburgs’ story in three distinct chapters, each featuring a three-dimensional “tableau”—a display of objects from the Habsburgs’ opulent court ceremonies—as context for the other works on view.

### **DAWN OF THE DYNASTY**

The first section features objects commissioned or collected by the Habsburgs from the 13th through the 16th centuries. In this late medieval/Renaissance period, Habsburg rulers staged elaborate commemorative celebrations to demonstrate power and to establish their legitimacy to rule, a tradition that flourished during the reigns of Maximilian I and his heirs. Works from this era—including sabers and armor, tapestries, Roman cameos and large-scale paintings—illustrate the significance of war and patronage in expanding Habsburg influence and prestige.



**Tableau:** Suits of armor displayed on horseback, and jousting weapons from an imperial tournament.

Highlights include:

- Armor of Emperor Maximilian I (c. 1492) made by Lorenz Helmschmid
- Bronze bust of Emperor Charles V (c. 1555) by Leone Leoni
- A rock crystal goblet made for Emperor Frederick III (1400-1450)

### **GOLDEN AGE**

The second, and largest section of the exhibition highlights the apex of Habsburg rule, the Baroque Age of the 17th and 18th centuries. The dynasty used religion, works of art, and court festivities to propagate its self-image and claim to rule during this politically tumultuous time. Paintings by Europe's leading artists demonstrate the wealth and taste of the Habsburg rulers, while crucifixes wrought in precious metals and gems, as well as sumptuous ecclesiastical vestments, reflect the emperor's role as defender of the Catholic faith.

Lorenz Helmschmid (ca. 1445-1516)  
*Composed Armor for Emperor Maximilian I* (1459-1519)  
Augsburg, 1492 Iron, brass, leather  
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien

**Tableau:** A procession featuring a Baroque ceremonial carriage and sleigh, with carvings by master craftsman Balthasar Ferdinand Moll.

Highlights include:

- An ivory tankard (1642) by Hans Jacob Bachmann
- *Infanta Maria Teresa* (1652-53), a portrait of the daughter of Philip IV of Spain and eventual wife of Louis XIV of France, by Velázquez
- An alchemical medal (1677), illustrated with portraits in relief of the Habsburgs, by Johann Permann

### **TWILIGHT OF THE EMPIRE**

The exhibition concludes with works from the early 19th century, when the fall of the Holy Roman Empire gave rise to the hereditary Austrian Empire—a transition from the *ancien régime* to a modern state in which merit determined distinction and advancement. Franz Joseph, who would reign longer than any previous Habsburg, saw the growth of nationalism and ultimately ruled over a dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary. As heir to the Habsburg legacy—and in the spirit of public education and enrichment—he founded the Kunsthistorisches Museum in 1891. Reflecting the modernization of the Habsburg administration, the exhibition ends with a spectacular display of court uniforms and dresses.

## **Tableau: Uniforms and women's gowns from the court of Franz Joseph**

Highlights include:

- Campaign uniform of Franz Joseph (1907)
- A velvet dress made for Empress Elisabeth (c. 1860/65)
- An evening gown made for Princess Kinsky (c. 1905)
- Ceremonial dress of Crown Prince Otto for the Hungarian Coronation (1916)

The exhibition is curated by Dr. Monica Kurzel-Runtscheiner, director of the Imperial Carriage Museum, Vienna. The hosting curator at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts is Kaywin Feldman, director. The exhibition is organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. The exhibition is on view in Minneapolis February 15–May 10, 2015; Houston June 14–September 13, 2015; and Atlanta October 18, 2015–January 17, 2016.

A full-color catalogue is being published by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, with essays by Dr. Monica Kurzel-Runtscheiner, director of the Imperial Carriage Museum, Vienna; Dr. Franz Pichorner, deputy director, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; and Dr. Stefan Krause, curator of arms and armor, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Additionally, a virtual exhibition of additional pieces will be viewable online, deepening the visitor experience and providing further opportunities for the public to engage with the art and its history.

*Bank of America is the National Sponsor.*

*Presented by: Best Buy Co., Inc., Friends of the Institute, U.S. Bank*

*Lead Sponsors: Ruth and John Huss, the Crosby Family Fund for Exhibitions, Delta Air Lines, Fredrikson & Byron, P.A., Cargill, Star Tribune*

*This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.*

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HABSBURGS**

The noble House of Habsburg rose to prominence in the late Middle Ages through strategic marriages, political alliances, and conquest. In 1273, count Rudolph IV gained control of Germany as King of the Romans and Habsburg domains continued to grow leading up to Pope Nicholas V's coronation of Frederick III as Holy Roman Emperor in 1452. Under Frederick's son Maximilian I and his successor Charles V, the Habsburgs achieved world-power status, assuming the title of Emperor without papal consent and enfolding Spain and Burgundy into the Habsburg-controlled territories. The dynasty split into Spanish and Austrian branches shortly thereafter, and in the 17th and 18th centuries the male lines died out, resulting in the loss of Spain.

In 1740, Maria Theresa—the sole female Habsburg ruler, who reigned for a remarkable 40 years—seized control of the Austrian line to become the final ruler of the House of Habsburg. The early 19th century witnessed the final demise of the Holy Roman Empire and the establishment of the main Habsburg line's successors: the House of Habsburg-Lorraine. A hundred years later in 1916, Emperor Charles I inherited a dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy upon the death of longtime Emperor Franz Joseph. More than 600 years of Habsburg sovereignty came to an end in 1918 with the close of World War I.

## RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### Opening-day Talk: The Power of Representation

Sunday, February 16, 2 p.m.; \$10; \$5 MIA Members

Monica Kurzel-Runtscheiner, PhD, director of the Imperial Carriage Museum, Vienna, and curator of the exhibition, shares insights about the dynasty that, over a span of some 500 years, commissioned and collected households full of masterpieces by which to display its power.

### Third Thursday: A Royal Affair

Thursday, February 19, 6-9 p.m.; free with refreshments for sale.

At “A Royal Affair” guests can celebrate splendor with free admission to “The Habsburgs” exhibition. The event also provides opportunities to take a royal portrait in the photobooth, dance at Viennese Waltz workshops, make a personalized coat of arms, and discover: *Which Habsburg are you?*

### Family Day: Kings, Queens & Castles

Sunday, March 8; 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.; free.

Families can take part in forging royal bling, try on a shiny suit of armor, and explore noble dwellings, costumes, and regal rituals from around the world.

### Talk: The Tournaments of the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance

Sunday, March 22, 2 p.m.; \$10; \$5 MIA Members

Stefan Krause, PhD, curator of arms and armor at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, explores the diverse history of the courtly tournament of the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance by highlighting armor in “The Habsburgs” exhibition.

## ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Home to over 87,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest wide-ranging art collections in the country—Rembrandt to van Gogh, Monet to Matisse, Asian to African—the MIA links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration. The 2013 fiscal year marked the highest attendance—679,357 visitors—in the nearly 100-year history of the MIA. For more information, visit [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org)

## ABOUT THE KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

The Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien is one of the foremost museums in the world, with rich holdings comprising artworks from seven millennia—from Ancient Egypt to the late 18th century. The collections of Renaissance and Baroque art are of particular importance. The Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien's extensive holdings are on show at different locations: the main building on Ringstrasse houses the Picture Gallery, Kunstammer Wien, the Collection of Greek and Roman Antiquities, the Egyptian and Near Eastern Collection and the Coin Collection. Other collections of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien are housed in the Neue Burg (i.e. the Collection of Historical Musical Instruments, the Collection of Arms and Armour, and the Ephesus Museum), in Hofburg Palace (the Treasury), and in Schönbrunn Palace (the Imperial Carriage Museum). The collections on show at Ambras Castle in Innsbruck are also part of the holdings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien.



Michelangelo Merisi, called Caravaggio, 1571 Milan - 1610 Porto Ercole(?) *The Crowning with Thorns* , ca 1602/1604, 127 cm x 166.5 cm  
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien

## PRESS CONTACTS

### MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Anne-Marie Wagener

Tel: 612-870-3280 | Email: [awagener@artsmia.org](mailto:awagener@artsmia.org)

Tammy Pleshek

Tel: 612-870-3171 | Email: [tpleshek@artsmia.org](mailto:tpleshek@artsmia.org)