

Universalmuseum Joanneum Press

Joanneum Universal Museum

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Showpieces Masterpieces of Goldsmithing from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection

Alte Galerie at Schloss Eggenberg,

Duration: 7th May – 31st October 2010

Opening: 7 pm, 6th May 2010

Curator: Ulrich Becker

Information: +43-316/583264-9532

Fine art craftsmanship flourished like never before in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Inexhaustible inventiveness and a highly developed sense of form produced astonishing work. It went far beyond the purely functional and was principally a feast for the eye – in that age, sight was considered the most superior of the five senses.

The products goldsmiths produced were not purely utilitarian objects but works of art of the utmost perfection, priceless showpieces that ushered in a literally glittering chapter in European collector culture and created the nuclei of the modern museum industry in the Kunstkammern (art cabinets). Neither princely nor patrician collectors spared their purses in constantly adding to these.

Goldsmiths of the age forever delighted in combining rich decoration with sophisticated workmanship. Particular pleasure was taken in mixing the exotic with the whimsical, as the very popular nautilus goblets bear out. Products of human workmanship were paired with the whims of nature, and in the mind of contemporary society they reflected the diversity of the universe. A key role was played in this field by the workshops of the South German art centres of Augsburg and Nuremberg. Notably “Augsburger Pracht” (Augsburg splendour) became legendary. The goldsmiths of the Fugger city dazzled the courts of Europe with the many works they turned out between the High Renaissance and Late Baroque ages.

Around thirty select pieces from the *Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection* will illustrate the glories of the age in a special exhibition at the Joanneum Universal Museum's Schloss Eggenberg in 2010.