

## **SHOWING STYRIA**

Universalmuseum Joanneum  
Mariahilferstraße 2-4, 8020 Graz  
www.steiermarkschau.at

presse@steiermarkschau.at  
Telefon +43-664/8017-9214

# SHOWING STYRIA 2025

## Ambition & Illusion

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400 Years of Schloss Eggenberg  
26 April – 2 November 2025  
Schloss Eggenberg, Graz

**Under the title Ambition & Illusion, Schloss Eggenberg in Graz serves as the central venue for the third edition of SHOWING STYRIA — commissioned by the Province of Styria and realised by the Universalmuseum Joanneum.**

**Running until the beginning of November 2025, the show's focus will be on the UNESCO World Heritage Site. A multimedia exhibition with unique loans encourages visitors to view the history of the palace and its inhabitants in a completely new way. All the museums on site will build upon this extraordinary show, immersing visitors this year in the world of the Eggenbergs. The show marks the 400th anniversary of the ambitious construction of the palace, commissioned by Hans Ulrich von Eggenberg in 1625.**

### **Schloss Eggenberg and its princes**

Schloss Eggenberg in Graz has its origins in the early 17th century and is indivisibly linked to the rise of the Eggenberg family. Hans Ulrich von Eggenberg, a close confidant and advisor to Emperor Ferdinand II, had the palace built in 1625. His aim was to create a symbolic ideal of order and harmony – as an alternative to the political, religious and social crises of his time. The architecture of the palace follows a precise symbolic programme: the building is laid out according to astronomical and calendrical principles, with 365 windows, 52 doors and 24 state rooms symbolising days, weeks and hours. The famous Planetary Room is an expression of this idea, depicting the concept popular at the time of an ordered world within the cosmos.

No less unusual than their residence is the history of the Eggenberg family, who owe their meteoric rise to their most outstanding talents – boldness, acumen and financial skill. At the beginning of the 17th century, the middle-class Eggenberg family produced one of the most important statesmen in Styrian history, Hans Ulrich. Originally provincial merchants, mint masters and city magistrates, the house of the Eggenbergs was led by Hans Ulrich to

the highest princely honours, making them the richest and most respected family in the country. With the early dying-out of the Eggenbergs in the 18th century, their power and fame correspondingly faded.

In 2025, the State Rooms, including the Palace Church, slip back into their original role for the exhibition titled Schloss Eggenberg: The Staging of a World. Here, they become stages for the grand presentation of a princely family that managed to turn its failure into an eternal success story with the help of a work of art.

### **Schloss Eggenberg: The Staging of a World**

The exhibition begins with a prologue that introduces the crisis-ridden period in Europe around 1600 and decodes the enigmatic architecture of the palace. Three acts in the State Rooms tell of the rise and fall of a family, starting with the first Prince Hans Ulrich von Eggenberg, his ambition and his actions as an ambitious arriviste. Insights are also offered into life at the princely court, which is characterised by ceremonial, strict hierarchy and fierce competition. Part of the exhibition is likewise dedicated to the 'female side' of the house: the stories of five princesses of Eggenberg and one empress reveal far more than the classic roles assigned to privileged women of the Baroque era. In the Planetary Room, the ceiling paintings are given a voice.

### **The highlight of the show: The Golden Carriage**

The Palace Church presents the most valuable exhibits of the exhibition. The full splendour of a princely appearance in Baroque Rome is brought to life here. The ceremonial Golden Carriage of the imperial ambassador Johann Anton von Eggenberg and unique items of clothing from his wardrobe as well as original textiles from his staging in sumptuous Rome in 1638 bear witness to this. The Golden Carriage (on display until October 6th) has left Bohemia for the first time in 360 years and represents the highlight of the show.

### **Sounds of Eggenberg: Music as a central element**

In addition, pieces of music play an important role as intangible exhibits. The artist collective ART HOUSE 17 has rediscovered, reworked and recorded music from the Eggenberg environment – the 'Sounds of Eggenberg'.

### **Precious loans reunited in Schloss Eggenberg**

For the first time, important family artifacts are on show together in the palace. Portraits, original documents, personal letters, books from the princely library, and precious textiles: all bring the Eggenberg world to life. The exhibition displays around 380 objects on an area covering almost 3,000 m². Around 190 objects on loan from 29 institutions in Germany and abroad reinforce the international dimension of the project.

The exhibition is based on a combination of precious loans and innovative media with the palace and its interior design, created by the internationally renowned studios OPERA Amsterdam, Studio Louter and Shosho.

### Special exhibitions in the Coin Cabinet and the Archaeology Museum

All the museums at Schloss Eggenberg belong to this year's SHOWING STYRIA: in addition to the main exhibition 'Schloss Eggenberg: A Staging of the World', the Coin Cabinet and Archaeology Museum are also showing special exhibitions as part of the show, while the Alte Galerie is guided tours on related themes.

In the **Archaeology Museum**, the exhibition *Graz 1699* presents a digital reconstruction of Baroque Graz based on a historical copperplate engraving, complemented by archaeological finds from the city that paint a vivid picture of everyday urban life in the 17th century. The focus is on housing culture, medical practices, education and religious life as well as the infrastructural challenges of early urban development.

*The Eggenberg Family and the Power of Money*, on display in the **Coin Cabinet**, focuses on the imperial right to mint coins, which allowed Hans Ulrich von Eggenberg and his descendants to produce their own gold and silver coins from 1625 onwards. On display are original ducats, talers and groschen of the Eggenbergs as well as imperial coinage from the 17th century, which, as rare contemporary witnesses, illustrate both the splendour and the political and economic crises of this era.

### The music pavilion as a companion in Schloss Eggenberg Park

One of the three pavilions framing SHOWING STYRIA this year will also be on display in Eggenberg Palace Park for the entire duration of the show. In this music pavilion, works by Erwin Wurm, Hubert Schmalix and Klaus Lang can be seen and heard.

The other two pavilions – the Styria Pavilion and the Alps-Adriatic Pavilion – will be on show in Mariazell, Leoben and Ljubljana.

### About SHOWING STYRIA

Since 2021, the State of Styria runs SHOWING STYRIA, a forward-looking biennial exhibition format organised by the Universalmuseum Joanneum, which explores pressing contemporary issues. As the regional exhibition, the first edition invites visitors to reflect on the past, present, and future of Styria. The show takes place at the History Museum, the Folk Life Museum at Paulustor, the Kunsthaus Graz, and through an innovative mobile exhibition unit: the pavilion. The second edition of SHOWING STYRIA in 2023 focuses on the diversity of life. Herberstein Zoo — part of the Universalmuseum Joanneum since 2022 — serves as the central venue, again accompanied by the pavilion, which extends the exhibition into the wider region.

In 2025, SHOWING STYRIA commemorates the 400th anniversary of the first Prince of Eggenberg's decision to expand the family residence. This year's exhibition offers a new perspective on Schloss Eggenberg and its legacy. The UNESCO World Heritage Site forms the centrepiece of the show, brought to life through a multimedia display that immerses visitors in a world of power, symbolism and historical transformation.



We wish to thank our main sponsors Energie Steiermark, Grazer Wechselseitige Versicherung, Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark as well as the project partner Graz Holding and the sponsors of the pavilions Sattler AG, AT&S, Mit Loidl oder Co GmbH and hs art service austria GmbH.