

Universalmuseum Joanneum Press

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Hunting Museum and Agriculture Museum Schloss Stainz

Hunting Museum and Agriculture Museum, Schloss Stainz, Schlossplatz 1, 8510 Stainz
Opening hours: 2nd April to 31st October, Tue–Sun: 10am–5pm
Closed from November to March
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With its splendid, Baroque abbey church, Schloss Stainz is the distinctive landmark of the rolling countryside around the market town of Stainz. Founded as an Augustinian Canons' Monastery in 1229, the whole complex underwent extensive structural changes in the 17th century. In 1840 Archduke Johann acquired the Stainz demesne. He established here a model farm and had fruit and vineyards planted around the castle. Today, Schloss Stainz is owned by his descendants, the Meran family.

Hunting Museum Schloss Stainz Hunting culture through the ages

For millennia, hunting has been an integral part of human life. Starting in September 2006, the new museum of hunting at Stainz Castle will be showcasing hunting culture in all its facets, not only presenting an extensive synopsis in terms of cultural history but also focusing on the interaction of man and nature.

Hunting Museum: Innovative presentation in historical walls

In several stages of construction an exhibition area of 1200m² was created, new depots built, the box-office and shop areas redesigned, and the administration area revitalised at Stainz Castle, that was built in 1695 and acquired by Archduke John in 1840. The innovative presentation not only fits in consummately with the historical setting of Stainz Castle, it also spotlights the long standing tradition of hunting in Styria, particularly the founder of the Joanneum, Archduke John, who was known as a passionate hunter and whose heirs now run Stainz Castle as a modern enterprise.

In addition to the permanent new display collection, Stainz Museum of Hunting would like to be a centre of competence for matters of hunting: along with future temporary presentations on this subject, specialists and interested visitors will also be able to take advantage of a study collection, educational and seminar offers, a specialised library and contemporary information media.

Dieter Bogner from bogner.cc, Gunther Greßmann (GWL), Armin Deutz (GWL; member of the board of the Styrian Provincial Hunting Association), and Karlheinz Wirnsberger, director of the hunting collection at Universalmuseum Joanneum, are responsible for the museum concept. Architect Georg Driendl from Vienna designed the new layout of the hunting collection at Stainz Castle.

Wild hounds, belling stags, or: The cultural history of hunting

Eight rooms on the first floor of Stainz Castle are dedicated to the cultural history of hunting. Valuable exhibits from many different origins – Baroque animal paintings and magnificent courtly objects, ornate powder horns, but also everyday objects and wonder cures from folk medicine – illustrate the far-reaching effects that the cultural phenomenon of hunting has always had and continues to have on art, literature, music and film.

The exhibits at Stainz Museum of Hunting range from a Stone-Age spear thrower to ornate Imperial firearms, to a wide variety of hunting weapons. But not only weapons – customs and ways of life also tell us about the history of hunting: While finding food was top priority in the Stone Age, in courtly hunting it was above all the list of kills that counted. This era was marked by festiveness, extravagance and hedonism.

Much later we come across the "lone hunter" and his counterpart, the poacher, who became a symbol of idyll, love of nature and rebellion against the authorities in literature, art and film. People's view of nature, and thus their attitude towards hunting, changed profoundly in the Romantic period: issues of wildlife ecology were advanced for the first time, with (natural) experience, silence and naturalness gaining ground. The romantic hunter, perhaps most prominently represented by Archduke John – and later the middle-class hunter – was guided in his hunting habits by John's respect of animals and nature, and often saw hunting as a way of experiencing nature in an intense way.

Not only people's approach to hunting changed over the centuries, so did the various forms and techniques of hunting, and they are the subject of in-depth analysis at Stainz Museum of Hunting. Technical developments and innovations in hunting entered the realm of everyday life and also shaped people's artistic views: To illustrate this, the Museum not only presents historical hunting tools but also paintings and original equipment such as magnificently adorned dog collars, a collection of weapons and an excellent falconry collection.

Then, as now, hunting is part of everyday culture and entwined with a wide range of customs. Ornate items of practical use and wonder cures from folk medicine testify to its mystical importance in superstition. Bear's gall tincture, items of practical use decorated with stags, or – in recent history – films on this topic illustrate the general cultural and historical importance of hunting in the development and customs of humankind.

Deerstalking, or: Wildlife ecology

Our visitors are in for some close encounters with animals on the second floor of Stainz Castle: The new Museum of Hunting aims to introduce visitors to the world of wildlife, providing information about habitats, and demonstrating the tasks of the modern hunter. Nine rooms focus on the biological and economic aspects of the interaction of man and nature; an exciting, vivid presentation with interactive exhibits offers the interested public numerous possible solutions to this subject.

From ants to capercaillies: Diversity on 10 km²

No two habitats are the same. Every animal has special requirements with regard to its ideal habitat – and you can see all these habitats at Stainz Museum of Hunting: What areas do animals live in and why? Is nature always natural? What habitat is “good” and what habitat is “bad”? How do our indigenous animals cope with the different seasons? For example, is there life under the snow? What does a capercaillie sound like? When are hunters allowed to, when are they supposed to shoot?

Look and learn, or: Guess who I am?

Not only you can see nature through different eyes, our little visitors can also learn a lot of new, exciting facts about their habitat at Stainz Museum of Hunting. A number of interesting public programme concepts invite our little guests to guess and join in the games, honing their perception of what's going on in their immediate natural environment and carefully showing them what they – what we all – are: guardians of nature!

Agriculture Museum Schloss Stainz Recipes for success and models for the future

From September 19th 2009, the Joanneum Universal Museum acquired another major attraction – the new Agriculture Museum at Schloss Stainz. Its permanent collection is not confined to a nostalgic look at the past but also includes a modern presentation of the ecological challenges of the future.

Exploring traditions

Agricultural products seem to be taken for granted these days, featuring in many guises in our everyday culture and Austria's touristic profile as a “land of enjoyment”. However, agriculture produces not only foodstuffs but also raw materials for industry and generating energy. Many modern forms of processing look back on a long history of development. Where hi-tech machines are used these days, originally very simple appliances were employed.

The new Agriculture Museum explores these traditions. It not only shows historic objects, but also uses modern media for an informative and modern presentation of issues of present-day

and future concern. The new display is closely co-ordinated – in both content and design – with Schloss Stainz's Hunting Museum, which has aroused great interest among visitors since it was opened in 2006. The agricultural collection is an exciting and inter-active investigation of aspects of agricultural activity, putting historical connections in a new perspective and highlighting links with our own day.

Expanding horizons

At the start, the exhibition tour focuses on the "cycle of nature". The subject is illustrated both by historic implements and an informative film by Martina Aichhorn about contemporary agriculture, presenting amazing machinery and surprising perspectives alike. Agricultural crops are shown not just as materials for foodstuffs but in new contexts as well – as the basis of adhesives, bandaging materials or meat substitutes, or in the form of toys. Particular emphasis is placed on integrated presentation – from the plant via the crop to the finished product. Visitors can also try their hands as "laboratory assistants". After all, where would modern agriculture be without research? This involves using a microscope to recognize invisible structures and making one's own discoveries about plants and their structure.

The close connection between agricultural applications and our cultivated landscape is particularly clear when experimenting on the large "media table", where an almost infinite number of possibilities loom for using a richly illustrated digital agricultural lexicon. But a willingness to experiment is also needed for the landscape puzzle!

Stories – paintings – buildings

Farming work has always been profoundly involved with social issues. The new permanent collection features not only facts and figures for agriculture as a form of employment under various conditions but also personal recollections from the early 20th century – to read or to listen to.

The arts have also left us a whole host of monuments to the image of farming life – over the centuries, art and literature have reflected the vicissitudes of social attitudes. In the Middle Ages, farming folk were seen as simple-minded, rough people. The Romantics left the 19th century with an idealized image of hard-working, devout peasants communing with nature. Subsequently, the focus in literature and art shifted to a realistic reflection of living and working conditions on the land. In the first half of the 20th century, farmers were stylized in art into "feeders of the nation". A series of paintings, e.g. by Ignaz Raffalt (1840), Joseph Heicke (1846) and Anton Marussig (1903) show that not only farmers but also farmhands and domestics were popular subjects in painting.

Farm buildings have also change dramatically in the course of history. Visitors can compare historical and contemporary agricultural buildings and discover the different functions of architecture.

The spirit of research and diversity of species

A further room is devoted to processing products with historic implements. Many of these appliances are still familiar, but who still knows how to use a „Brotreim“ (bread stand), „Ölkuh“ (pumpkin seed press) or butter barrel? Thematically linked is the next room, which focuses on the revolutionary ideas of Archduke Johann and the activities of the Imperial Agricultural Society he founded. Exhibits include valuable landscape models constructed for the purposes of study and documentation in the 19th century. And not only models – tried and tested originals are also on view.

The seed collection of the Imperial Agricultural Society documents the meticulous investigative spirit of the founder of our museum in the field of agriculture. Archduke Johann got the Society to import particularly high-yield crop types from other countries, therewith for example popularizing species of bean that give far greater yields than fava beans. No fewer than 55 jars with phaseolins in a wide range of different colours and species (including kidney beans) can be admired in the exhibition.

The idea for this collection of seeds was already mentioned in the draft statutes of the Imperial Agricultural Society: “1) Adequate space in the Institute garden, plus 2) a number of yokes of the adjacent city moat are set aside for the growing of seed stocks on a small scale, research on a larger scale, and the application of farming tools. Laid out in the garden is an orchard nursery.”

Wood and hi-tech

Archduke Johann’s ideas still flourish in forestry as well. Exhibits include historical equipment, Styrian timber joints from the construction industry and also completely new products from the timber processing industry. In this context, wood injection-moulding is the magic abracadabra. Wood pellets and maize starch are the raw materials for this “growing” material, which stands out particularly for its long-term utilization. As important is the fact that there is no waste during processing. Products made with it are used in the toy-making and packaging industry, the construction of musical instruments and tool manufacturing. Even the motor industry is going new ways and making (for example) the interior cladding of car doors from wood injection-moulded parts.

The basis of the economic utilization of timber is healthy forests that have other functions as well. Recreation and conservation, utilization and welfare effects and other subjects to do with our forests are explored separately in four fascinating media stations.

The permanent exhibition of the new Agriculture Museum at Schloss Stainz occupies 15 rooms with a total exhibition area of 910 m² (10,000 sq. ft).