
KUNST HISTORISCHES MUSEUM



Arcimboldo – Bassano – Bruegel Nature's Time

11 March to 29 June 2025

From March 2025, the Kunsthistorisches Museum is showing *Arcimboldo – Bassano – Bruegel. Nature's Time*, a major exhibition that includes masterpieces by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Jacopo and Leandro Bassano, as well as many other sixteenth-century artists.

How did people in the Renaissance relate to nature and time? How was that relationship given visual expression in art? What role did the numerous fascinating series of the seasons or the months produced at the time play in this context? These are some of the questions examined in the exhibition, which explores the works' art-historical aspects and their content, as well as the intentions of the patrons who commissioned them.

A large variety of objects

In addition to paintings, sculptures, and tapestries, the exhibition features clocks, globes, scientific instruments, and calendars, together with costly manuscripts and prints that illustrate how man has sought to navigate and find his proper place in the world.

Leandro Bassano's enthralling series of paintings of the months, from the collections of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, plays a central role in the exhibition. These large canvases surprise and delight the viewer with their depictions of landscapes, animals, fruits, agricultural

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implements, and rustic activities. In addition, they offer unique insights into everyday life in the territories of the Republic of Venice during the Renaissance.

Science and art in close connection

The depiction of naturalia – which enjoyed a heyday in the sixteenth century and went hand in hand with the incipient Scientific Revolution – forms a cornerstone of Renaissance visual culture. Such representations not only served as key tools for the dissemination of knowledge but provided clear and comprehensible illustrations for scholarly treatises. Science thus depended on art to document nature in its infinite variety. From the Medici to Emperor Rudolf II, illustrations, drawings, prints, and paintings of this kind circulated freely at European princely courts, feeding the curiosity of artistic and scientific minds alike.

The exhibition comprises around a hundred artworks. Alongside treasures from the rich holdings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, it presents a selection of paintings, drawings, and manuscripts loaned from international museums and other institutions in Vienna.

Curated by Francesca Del Torre Scheuch

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PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

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Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526–1593)
Four Seasons in One Head
c.1590
Washington, National Gallery of Art, Paul Mellon Fund



Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526–1593)
Summer
dated 1563
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Picture Gallery
© KHM-Museumsverband



Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526–1593)
Winter
dated 1563
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Picture Gallery
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Jacopo da Ponte, known as Jacopo Bassano (c. 1510–1592)
Summer (Sacrifice of Isaac)
c. 1576
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Picture Gallery
© KHM-Museumsverband



Pieter Bruegel d. Ä. (um 1525/30–1569)
The Return of the Herd (Autumn)
dated 1565
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Picture Gallery
© KHM-Museumsverband



Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525/30–1569)
The Hunters in the Snow (Winter)
1565
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Picture Gallery
© KHM-Museumsverband



Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)
Dead European Roller
c.1500 (?)
© Vienna, Albertina

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