

VILLA STUCK

Press Release, September 29, 2025

The Historic Rooms after Reopening From October 18, 2025

Head of the Franz von Stuck/Art Nouveau Collections: Margot Th. Brandlhuber

Extensive measures have been taken in the Historic Rooms to protect the artworks and the rooms themselves, including the modernization of security and fire protection systems, as well as climate control systems for the windows, walls, and ceilings. For the reopening, the Historic Rooms will feature new furnishings, a new arrangement of the artwork, and new acquisitions.

The presentation of selected paintings by Franz von Stuck includes rarely or never-before-seen works from the artist's early period, such as *Fantastic Hunt* (before 1890) and *The Vision of St. Hubert* (1890). Along with *The Guardian of Paradise*, with which Stuck rose to fame as a "shooting star" in the German art scene from 1889 onwards, these works mark the beginning of his career as a painter.

New to the collection is the *Portrait of a Woman from Mainz/Mrs. Fränkel*, circa 1914, in its original frame designed by Franz von Stuck. The painting was bequeathed to the Museum VILLA STUCK by a Munich art collector and is now on display in the former boudoir. This high-quality commissioned portrait depicts the sitter in a purple dress, holding an apple, against a suggestive landscape background; the ornate, gilded frame was designed and painted by Stuck himself. This portrait of a woman was previously only known through a contemporary black-and-white reproduction. It impresses with its meticulous brushwork, color composition, and vibrant expression.

The Baroque painting *The Beheading of John the Baptist* (overpainted by Stuck, located on the fireplace wall of the reception room), the new *Portrait of a Woman from Mainz*, and the elaborately designed and crafted frames of selected works in the Historic Rooms have all been restored and conserved. They provide new insights into the sophisticated and sometimes experimental painting technique of Franz von Stuck, who is not only considered one of the leading artists of Symbolism in Germany, but also one of the innovators of his time in terms of painting technique.

In the Music Room, visitors will see a reconstruction of cinnabar-red silk curtains, based on historical images and written sources. These are important for understanding Stuck's composition of color harmonies in his spatial artworks, where cinnabar is a recurring motif, appearing in the murals, the curtains, and even in the repainting of the painting *The Beheading of John the Baptist* in the adjacent reception room.

The restoration of the balustrade and carpet in the staircase, based on historical models, and the renewal of the curtains in the ground floor rooms facing the garden complete the picture.

The results of the research on the colors and painting techniques of Franz von Stuck's murals in the music room, conducted in collaboration with the Doerner Institute in Munich and the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege (Bavarian State Office for Monument Preservation), will be presented during guided tours.

Conservation measures to protect the valuable upholstery fabrics in the Reception Room and Music Room were carried out in cooperation with the Textile Conservation Department of the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege.

A fifty-six page, richly illustrated brochure in German and English will be published for the opening, and will be available free of charge to visitors of the historic rooms upon purchase of an admission ticket.

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Cultural Cooperation: Museum VILLA STUCK – HIGHLIGHTS International Art Fair at the Munich Residenz, October 14–19, 2025 (public days: October 16–19, 2025)

To mark its reopening, the Museum VILLA STUCK will present selected works from its collections in a cultural collaboration with the 16th Munich HIGHLIGHTS International Art Fair, curated by Margot Th. Brandlhuber, in the Bronze Halls of the Munich Residenz. www.munichhighlights.com

On display are Franz von Stuck's large-scale plaster models for the façade reliefs of his New Studio (1914/15), depicting *Allegories of the Four Elements: Fire, Water, Earth, and Air*, and another important relief, *The Judgment of Paris* (1923), from the artist's later work. Franz von Stuck is considered one of the most important Symbolist artists of his time.