

The Town Hall Paintings

In 1876 the subject of the paintings of Landshut's Ceremonial Room was agreed: the Landshut Wedding of 1475, the landmark event in the town's history.

The subject could not have been better suited to the four artists from Munich who had been assigned the task. All four were actively involved in the contemporary fashion for historical parades made up of lavish floats and elaborately costumed participants, accompanied by musicians.

When researching the project the artists used the records left by the Margrave's scribe Hanns Oring as

their main source but also researched many visual sources and made intensive costume studies. Despite this pursuit of historical authenticity, the romantic taste of the times inevitably creeps though. The architecture of the room provides the paintings with a magnificent frame as well as determining their structure.

In the entrance area the wall is separated into four sections by the door and two fireplaces. The opposite side, divided also by two fireplaces, forms three areas, the central of which is spacious enough for the depiction of the wedding party with the bride and groom. It is this image which greets the visitor on entering the room.

The four painters combined their talents to create a harmonious and impressive image of the triumphal parade of the bride and groom from outside the town to St Martin's church.

The painters

Rudolf Seitz painted the beginning of the procession up to Christoph der Starke, Ludwig Löfftz the group of town representatives and senior churchmen, Konrad Weigand painted the group of noblemen and women and the sequence was completed by August Spieß' depiction of the group around the bride and groom and the end of the procession.



The model

Carola Gruson, née Martin (1859-1922) posed for August Spieß' painting of the bride, Hedwig (N.B. Gruson was the grandmother of Edith v. Bohlen u. Halbach.)

(1) Duke Georg, the bridegroom



Georg looks noble on his temperamental black steed with its exquisitely decorated saddlery. He doffs his cap in greeting to his royal bride.

(2) Hedwig, daughter of the King of Poland, the bride



Hedwig looks delicate, almost transfigured. Her hair is finely braided and she wears a royal crown. Her veil falls elegantly. Her slender limbs are clothed in a fine gown, exquisitely embroidered with pearls. She gazes at her bridegroom with wide child-like eyes.



(3) Maximilian

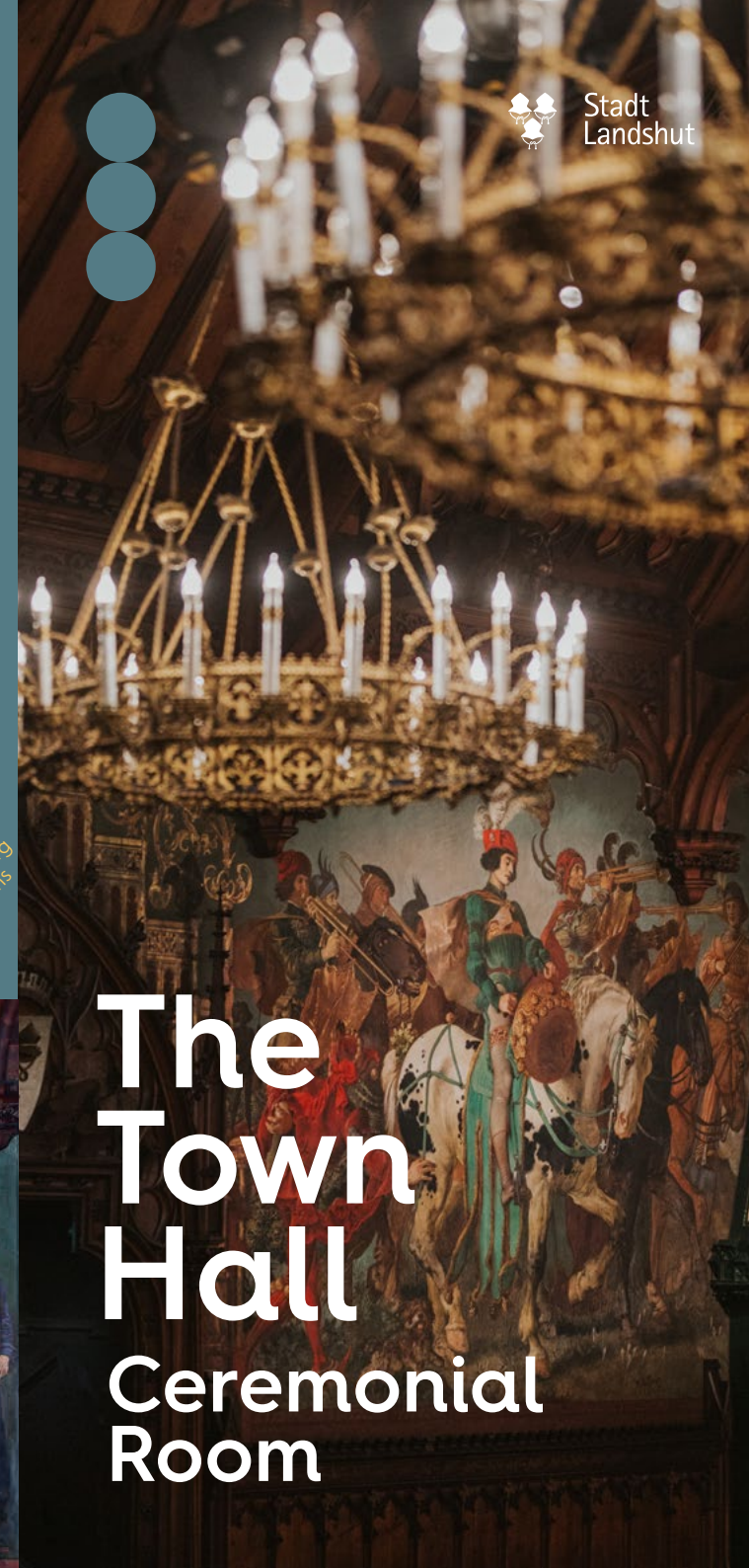
Son of the Kaiser, later Kaiser Maximilian I, the last knight to sit on the imperial throne, is clad in iron armour. His visor is open and his helmet is extravagantly decorated with peacock feathers. The train of his helmet flutters in the breeze.

(4) Kaiser Friedrich III

Friedrich sits proud and upright on a splendid horse. Wrapped in a magnificent golden brocade cloak, he carries the symbols of his office: crown and sceptre. He is looking forwards. A young nobleman holds the shield with the eagle at his feet.



- medieval boundary pillar
- town woman
- Hausmeister Schleich
- town man
- Kursachsen standard
- noblewoman with wreath
- esquire
- town woman with child sucking its thumb
- town vassel with halberd
- mounted Polish nobility
- Georgi, son of Duke Ludwig, the groom (1)
- temperamental steed
- Hedwig/Jadwiga, daughter of King Kasimir, the bride (2)
- the bride's golden coach
- Chancellor Dr Martin Mair
- candle-bearing page
- mounted archer
- man wearing Polish traditional dress leading horse
- palomino grey horse
- man wearing Polish traditional dress leading horse
- man wearing Polish traditional dress leading horse
- Duke Albrecht in tournament armour
- nobility
- armoured man
- young noble man with the eagle coat of arms
- Maximilian, son of the Kaiser (3)
- Kaiser Friedrich III (4)
- black boy, carrying the train of Margravine Anna, Albrecht's wife
- noblewoman
- Duke Eberhard of Württemberg
- Margravine Anna, Albrecht's wife
- Brandenburg standard
- Margrave Albrecht-Achilles
- Bayern Standard
- noblewomen
- Shield displaying the Württemberg coat of arms



The Town Hall Ceremonial Room

The Town Hall Ceremonial Room

Since medieval times the first floor of the central building has been dominated by the magnificent Ceremonial Room. During the Landshut Wedding of 1475 the room was used for the wedding dance and it was here that the noble ladies leaned out of the windows to watch the tournament held in the Altstadt below. 400 years later the town authorities commissioned the famous architect Georg Hauberrisser to refurbish the room in a neo-Gothic style.

The finished room became one of the most impressive examples of the decorative arts of the late

nineteenth century. The necessary monies were authorised by no less a patron than the Bavarian fairy tale king, Ludwig II. The mighty wooden architecture of the ceiling reaches up into the attic space of the building, revealing the steep slant of the roof. The ceiling is decorated with the coats of arms of important families. Protruding carved gargoyles are based on those decorating gothic cathedrals.

The wooden pillars supporting the rear gallery are also decorated with coats of arms. The huge bronze chandelier and particularly Franz Reither's elaborately tiled fireplaces, fine examples of Landshut's pottery tradition, add to the splendid atmosphere. Even the wooden panelling and the door fittings were chosen to form part of the work of art as a whole. And all this before the visitor has properly admired the real wonder of the room: the sequence of paintings around the walls.

(5) Christoph der Starke



He wears his battle armour and carries his lion-crested tournament helmet on his saddle. He wears a red cap on his proudly raised head, the colour of which pleasingly corresponds with the trapper on his horse.

(6) Mounted military drummer

As a character he has at best a supporting role but artistically he plays a leading part. He sits on dappled grey horse. His light coloured cloak blows in the wind. White ostrich feathers decorate his red cap, contrasting with the green of his doublet and saddle pad.



(7) Ducal herald



The herald sits on a mighty stallion holding a herald's staff decorated with ribbons in the air. The crest on his cloak shows the Bavarian blue and white diamonds and the Palatine lion.

The 1475 Landshut Wedding: historical documentation and theatre



The large and impressive paintings adorning the Town Hall's Ceremonial Room are typical of the historicism style of decoration in German town halls. These paintings not only depict an event from history but have also made history themselves. In 1902 they inspired Josef Linnbrunner and Georg Toppel from Landshut to organise the first re-enactment of the wedding of 1475, an event still held every four years in the town.

The Town Hall building

The original Landshut Town Hall is suspected to have been built near St Martin's church in the thirteenth century. In 1380 the Town Council bought a town house in the middle of the Altstadt and subsequently the two adjoining properties. In this manner, three gothic town houses became the historic Town Hall of Landshut, the three were unified with a common façade in 1861.

The beautiful sixteenth century Renaissance oriel window was preserved. Several years ago a modern plenary room was set up in the adjoining house in the Grasgasse. The Town Hall is not only the centre of the town's administration but also a centre for art. The small and large galleries and the gothic cellar play host to a range of excellent exhibitions.



two monks
candle-bearing page
priests
candle-bearing page
bishop
Archbishop Bernhard of Salzburg
Papal legate
Provost Mauerkirchner von Altkötting
baldachin
candle-bearing page
councillors and jurists

Landshut standard
patrician
standard with diamond pattern and emblem of Munich (Münchener Kindl)
standard
page with Bavarian coat of arms
candle-bearing page
squire with a tournament lance and three tournament knights with closed visors
Duke Christoph der Starke (5)
three noblewomen

the coat of arms of Landshut with its three helmets
trombonist
jester in costume with bells
trombonist
mounted military drummer (6)
three trumpeters

mercenaries with halberds
ducal herald (7)
citizens
running boy
girl



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