**PRESS RELEASE**

**„KREMSER SCHMIDT RELECTURE“ (a new interpretation of Kremser Schmidt) is the title of an exhibition by the artist Raphael Bergmann, featuring more than 50 acrylic paintings inspired by works of the Baroque painter Kremser Schmidt.**

**The exhibition that was set up in the education centre of the church St. Hippolyt in St. Pölten, on the occasion of Kremser Schmidt’s 300th birthday, will be on display until 10 February 2019. Bergmann’s newly interpreted paintings are accessible free of charge every day until 10 p.m.**

Raphael Bergmann, who was born in St. Pölten in 1959 and grew up in Vienna, took up painting at an early age. Upon advice by Gerhard Gutruf, who recognised his talent, the artist attended the International Summer Academy in Salzburg that was established by Oskar Kokoschka, when he was only 16 years old. In Professor Claus Pack’s “Visual Art” seminar, Bergmann received class awards in two consecutive years.

However, after graduating from high school in 1978, his path did not lead him to the Academy of Fine Arts. Instead he took up studies in theology. Bergmann joined the Benedictine monastery Göttweig in 1983 and following his priestly ordination, he performed pastoral care duties for the monastery’s parishes. While he never neglected painting, he was unable to truly dedicate himself to the discipline in those years, due to a lack of time. It was only after his withdrawal from the monastery in 1995 and his move to Graz that he was able to truly develop his skills further. He soon achieved recognition of his work, which was manifested by an exhibition held in the Steiermarkhof in 1997. In 2001 Bergmann began a cooperation with the gallery *Haus der Kunst - Andreas Lendl*, a step which would turn out to be decisive for his further career. His body of work comprises three artistic themes: landscapes, family pictures and film scenes, which were presented in this gallery in 2007, in the form of a large personal exhibition. In 2008 a similar exhibition was held at *Galerie Maringer* in St. Pölten. These activities led to connections in Berlin, and Bergmann’s work was shown in the artists’ association gallery *Treptow* and in *Rathausgalerie Lichtenberg*in 2010 and 2011 respectively. In 2015, twenty years after withdrawing from his duties as a priest, Bergmann starts to deal with religious subject matters, once again. He chooses the works of Kremser Schmidt that he has been familiar with since his time at the monastery, as a starting point for his variations. This work soon leads to positive feedback, in the form of a large exhibition held in Vienna/Dornbach in 2016. The following summer, Bergmann's work is shown at the Klagenfurt Trade Fair (by “Ars Artis”) and in autumn of the same year in the vaulted cellar of the restaurant Hansen in the stock exchange building in Vienna. During this phase, Bergmann attracted the attention of Franz Moser, the curator of the education centre of the church St. Hippolyt, who was searching for a suitable idea to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Kremser Schmidt’s birth. Based on his initial impression, he immediately invited Raphael Bergmann for a comprehensive exhibition that is now shown in the education centre.

What makes the paintings so special, is their artistic confrontation of the past as a means to open up new perspectives for the future. During the exhibition’s duration, Raphael Bergmann is going to be available a number of times, to discuss his work with prospective buyers and interested exhibition visitors.