

The First Mothers Day Stamp of 1935



When the first "Mothers Day" stamp was issued on 1st May 1935, the design was a mother and child based closely on the painting "Die Mutterliebe" by the artist Josef Danhauser (Vienna, Belvedere Gallery, Inv. Nr. 280. Oil on canvas, 507×420mm). This 24g indigo stamp was designed and engraved by Professor Hans Ranzoni d-J. (The actual painting is mainly in tones of creams and browns.) The stamp was recess printed at the State Printing Works. It was line perforated 12½; pairs are known with the centre imperforate, and singles (possibly from the margins) with one side imperf. A printing of two million pieces was made; the stamp was valid until 31st August 1935.

Joseph Danhauser was born in Vienna in 1805, the eldest son of sculptor and furniture manufacturer Joseph Ulrich Danhauser and his wife Johanna (née Lambert). He took his first painting lessons with his father and later assisted the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. He studied with Johann Peter Krafft and held his first exhibition in 1826. After his father's death in 1829, he and his brothers managed the furniture factory during the Biedermeier movement; painting took a back seat for a few years.

Meanwhile, Josephine Clara Streit was born in Vienna on 12th March 1813, the daughter of Josef Streit, a surgeon, and his wife Anna Benack. While she grew up in Vienna, one of her playmates was Josef Danhauser whose mother had been a close friend of Anna Benack since she was a girl.

In 1838 Danhauser, who had resumed painting, was appointed vice-rector of the Vienna Academy and promptly married Josephine, with whom he had three children: Josef, Marie and Julie, born in 1839, 1841 and 1843 respectively. In 1839 Danhauser painted *Die Mutterliebe* using his new wife and first-born child as models. Josef Danhauser died of typhus in Vienna in 1845.