

# The Rubenianum Quarterly

2014  
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## 'A veritable treasure of study material': Disclosing the Collection of Ludwig Burchard

Thanks to the financial support of the Flemish Government, a one-year project of inventorying and disclosing Ludwig Burchard's collection started in July 2014. The results of its first quarter represent a major advance for the core of Burchard's legacy: the extended 'Rubens documentation', which is the primary source of the *Corpus Rubenianum*. It includes, in addition to Burchard's original documents and photographs, a multitude of information that has been added since 1963 by other Rubens scholars, Corpus authors and Rubenianum staff. This fund thus forms a continually growing, 'living' research archive with different origins.

In the first project phase, this archive was clarified through a process of planning and repackaging, in order to visualize the distinction between the different components. Using folders with a fixed colour code, Burchard's original notes and annotated photographs are now separated from the material that was added before the relevant Corpus volume was published, as well as from the information following its publication. Simultaneously, other loose documentation on Rubens was integrated herewith, resulting in a unified Rubens documentation. Evidently, only the boxes concerning published Corpus volumes have been handled in this manner, while those in use by active Corpus authors remain in their present state.

The benefits of this operation are numerous. It allows specific preservation measures for the oldest, fragile Burchard notes. A concordance between the source material and the Corpus entries has been established, which will prove particularly useful for the volumes yet to appear. The parallel project 'Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard' also benefits from this operation, as the data entry in RKDimages can now start from clearly structured and complete documentation files.

Thanks to the efforts of motivated student workers, all 333 boxes concerning the already published Corpus volumes were repackaged in just three months. The next step in this operation, scheduled later this year, will be the long-awaited disclosure to reading-room visitors of this treasure of Rubens information. Read more on the project's future achievements here or in the Rubenianum's Collections Newsletter! | *Dirk Buelens*

*Dear friends of the Rubenianum,*

Three current projects illustrate the Rubenianum's continuous drive to develop new initiatives and growth in disclosing its collections. Since much of the work in progress may initially remain invisible to the public, please join me in an update.

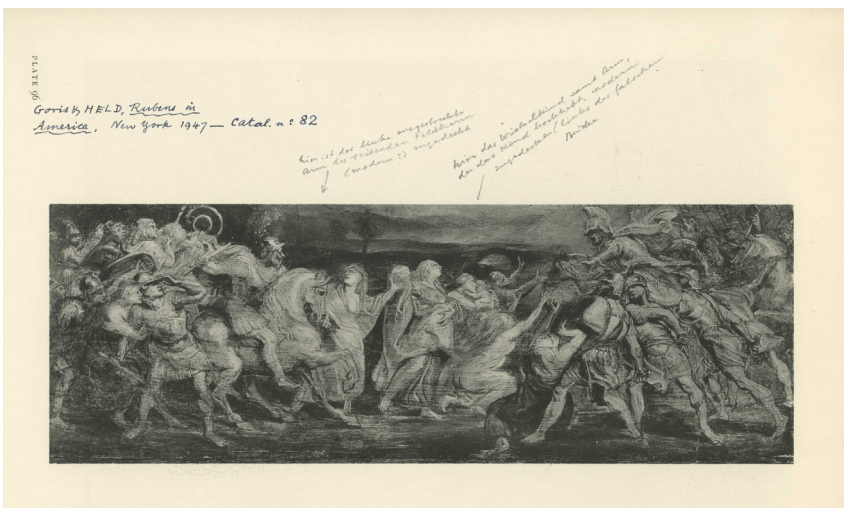
Diligently guided by curator of research collections Bert Watteeuw, the project 'Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard' advances according to scheme, thanks to a generous second grant from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation's Digital Resources Grants Program. By now, 8 out of 22 online published Corpus volumes have been fully registered in RKDimages by cataloguer Karen De Meyst. Thus, the online availability of up-to-date, illustrated and contextualized Rubens information expands literally day by day.

On this page, art historian and archivist Dirk Buelens shares the first results of another project which we were able to start last summer with the help of Flemish funding. Its goal is to open up Ludwig Burchard's invaluable bequest through a detailed scientific inventory. At the same time, it aims at furthering the methodological standards and practices for dealing with art historians' archives.

A third project that will commence this very autumn encompasses the cataloguing of over 30,000 auction catalogues in the Rubenianum's holdings and 3000 in our fellow Antwerp museum libraries in the online catalogue Anet, an operation that is estimated to take 5.3 years. Just like the previous projects, it will greatly enhance the accessibility of our resources. This project, which is designed and coordinated by our librarian Ute Staes, is made possible by the city of Antwerp.

Despite their status as projects, all these endeavours contribute directly to the Rubenianum's mission to stimulate and facilitate research into Flemish art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both on-site and online. And despite the supplementary workload that new initiatives and growth inevitably bring for an institute, their results support our core tasks, including the *Corpus Rubenianum*, in a long-lasting and sustainable way. Our most sincere gratitude goes to the funding bodies that allow us to make this progress for the benefit of the worldwide community of scholars in early-modern Flemish art.

*Véronique Van de Kerckhof*  
Director of the Rubenianum



## Isabelle van Tichelen Introduces Herself

*'Do not focus on Rubens and Jordaens, but rather on all other Flemish artists, active in Brussels and Antwerp and working as designers for the Flemish tapestry industry during the seventeenth century. It would be great to have a critical status questionis.'*

With these words Professor Guy Delmarcel, also curator of the Textile collection at the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels, described the content of my master's thesis at the University of Leuven. 'Moreover, Professor Hans Vlieghe will be your second adviser!' Two leading specialists guided me enthusiastically through the vast subject of my thesis on the crossroads of Flemish painting and tapestry. Partly thanks to the vast visual and bibliographic documentation of the Rubenianum, artists such as Antoon Sallaert, Jan Boeckhorst and Justus van Egmont became alive and familiar to me.

After my graduation, I wanted to deepen my knowledge in Flemish tapestry abroad. And where indeed could I better go than to one of the most important collections of Flemish tapestries in Europe? I received a one-year scholarship from the 'Commissariaat-Generaal voor de Internationale Culturele Samenwerking' for the imperial city of Vienna (1985). Guy Delmarcel arranged an internship for me – for which I am still very grateful – in the 'Collection of Sculpture, Arts and Crafts', nowadays better known as the *Kunstkamer* of the *Kunsthistorisches Museum*. Under the guidance of its competent and charming textile colleague, the late *Frau Dr Rotraud Bauer*, I set up a photographic documentation on tapestries similar to that of Delmarcel in Brussels. Apart from that I updated the list of tapestry bibliography, did some translations of tapestry articles from French into German and was taken by Rotraud Bauer and the other colleagues of the department to their depots, restoration workshops and the exhibitions they were involved in. I also attended the classes of 'Technique and History of the Goldsmith's and Lapidary's Art' and 'Italian Bronzes', given by colleagues Rudolf

Distelberger and Manfred Leithe-Jasper at the *Universität Wien*. This once-in-a-lifetime experience gave me not only training and insight into the everyday museum practice, but above all a boost to focus further on Flemish tapestry of the seventeenth century.

Following my year in Vienna, Guy Delmarcel invited me for a one-year internship in the *Cinquantenaire Museum* in Brussels. I finally stayed more than four and a half years. Due to some administrative problems, I first joined the museum on a voluntary basis for thirteen months. By that time, Delmarcel had already collected an impressive number of photographs of marks and monograms found on ancient Flemish tapestries, which he wanted to publish in a dictionary (a work still in progress). It was my main task to file the pictorial material and to enlarge the documentation by searching for more information in the specialist literature, sale catalogues and public and private collections worldwide. Giving lectures on the subject was part of the awareness campaign, and for me, personally, the icing on the cake was the lecture I delivered on the 'Joseph V Columbus Tapestry Symposium' in the presence of 800 colleagues at the *National Gallery of Washington* (1989). Meanwhile I was granted the internship, followed by a half-year of curatorship *ad interim*. In the latter capacity I was given a wide range of responsibilities, including control of the textiles in the exhibition rooms and the depot, administrative work, receiving international guests and colleagues, and escorting tapestries to exhibitions in Belgium and abroad. Luckily, I had learned a lot from Guy Delmarcel, who continuously shared his knowledge, always with his typical inexhaustible enthusiasm. My last years at the museum were supported by a fundamental research grant from the 'Fonds voor Collectief Fundamenteel Onderzoek'. I continued the research for the dictionary of marks and monograms, and when Guy Delmarcel left the museum definitively for the University of Leuven, I once again replaced him as curator for almost a year.

While working in the museum I wrote various articles about tapestries, some in collaboration with my master's thesis advisers. I was invited by the *Royal Manufacturers De Wit* in Mechelen and antique dealer Bernard Blondeel of Antwerp to write the entries for the exhibition of 'Five Centuries of Flemish Tapestry', held in Taiwan and Mechelen. I continued the collaboration with both companies when the funding of my job at the *Cinquantenaire Museum* dried up. Hired as second art historian by Bernard Blondeel, I set up a photographic documentation of

Flemish tapestries, did research on tapestries in the collection and co-authored the exhibition 'Golden Weavings', held in Mechelen, Munich and Amsterdam (1993). As funds for a long-term career were lacking, I switched temporarily to private marking as executive secretary and purchaser. Finally, my husband's job brought me to South West London. We lived near Hampton Court Palace, with Henry VIII's most splendid Flemish tapestries, *The Story of Abraham*. My most recent article was about Rubens's *Constantine* series for the Rubens Textiles exhibition in Antwerp (1997).

I stayed at home with the children until Arnout Balis suggested me to become a volunteer at the *Centrum Rubenianum* at the beginning of 2013. The prospect of being submerged again in the art of the seventeenth century was something I could not resist. I enjoyed seeing members of the former staff such as Hans Vlieghe and Carl Van De Velde, and I was pleasantly surprised to meet up with three young, passionate research and editorial assistants: Marieke D'Hooghe, Prisca Valkeniers and Bert Schepers. From March 2013 on, I came once or twice a week to set up a database of the contents of Ludwig Burchard's personal agendas, recorded in his distinctive handwriting. I was asked to step into the *Corpus* project to take charge of Guy Delmarcel's part of the volume on Rubens's tapestry cycle of Decius Mus and later on also that of co-author Reinhold Baumstark (publication planned in 2015). As Marieke D'Hooghe went on maternity leave in August, I was offered a part-time job for one year. Needless to say, I feel very privileged to be part of this dedicated, highly skilled team. But now I have one focus: the master Rubens himself!

### The Rubenianum Lectures

*Please note that the originally planned December lecture has been changed.*

Next lecture: Sunday, 21 December 2014, 11 am.

DR CLAIRE BAISIER  
Museum Mayer van den Bergh

*In the Pursuit of Apelles. Fritz Mayer van den Bergh (1858–1901) and his collection of drawings*

Amongst the art treasures collected by Fritz Mayer van den Bergh are his drawings from the 16th to the 19th century. This lecture will explore the personal taste and motives of Mayer van den Bergh, as well as the suppliers and sources of this part of his fabulous collection. The lecture coincides with the exhibition 'Renaissance Drawings from Antwerp Private Collections' in the *Museum Mayer van den Bergh* that will include a number of Fritz' early drawings. Participants will have the opportunity to visit the exhibition on the day of the lecture.

*The lecture is in Dutch and will take place at the Rubenianum.*



# Sensation and Sensuality: Rubens and his Legacy

## Curator Nico Van Hout on the Brussels and London exhibition

The Rubenianum Quarterly is glad to introduce Nico Van Hout, a scholar very well acquainted with Rubens's oeuvre. Since 2000 he has been researcher and curator at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp (KMSKA), where he is responsible for seventeenth-century painting. He has curated several fascinating exhibitions: 'Rubens Doorgelicht' (2000), 'Copyright Rubens' (2004), 'Bruegelland' (2011), 'Het Gulden Cabinet' (2013) ... to name but a few.

Nico started his study of Rubens at the inescapable Rubenianum. Between 1994 and 1998 he was an NWO project assistant under Arnout Balis and later on prepared his doctorate on deadcolouring and other underlying stages in the work of Rubens. His deep interest in the technical aspects of painting originated during his studies of restoration and conservation at Antwerp's Royal Academy.

His recent focus on Rubens and Rubens's influence on other artists resulted in the present exhibition: 'Sensation and Sensuality: Rubens and his Legacy'. Because of renovation works the KMSKA will be closed until the end of 2017. 'Sensation and Sensuality' therefore takes place at the Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR) in Brussels and is a collaborative project involving both institutions and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, where the exhibition will be seen in the spring of 2015. We now give the floor to Nico Van Hout, who on these two pages will guide us through this fascinating show.

The idea for this exhibition goes back a long time. Paul Huvenne first suggested organizing a show on Rubens and his workshop, in analogy with M.L. Hairs's well-known book *Dans le sillage de Rubens*, but this proved to be too complex. The theme is interesting but controversial and among scholars there is no unanimity on the subject. What is more, it is also felt to be rather too hermetic for the general public. I therefore suggested to Paul and Norman Rosenthal (the then director of exhibitions at the Royal Academy) to widen the theme and focus on Rubens's influence on the history of art over more than four centuries.

It is a paradox that Rubens is both inimitable and has served, for centuries now, as the great model for such painters as Rembrandt, Murillo, Watteau, Fragonard, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Delacroix, Cézanne, Renoir, Kokoschka, and many others, often far beyond the confines of Europe. Even in the work of Picasso, we encounter echoes of Rubens's visual language. This international exhibition looks at this phenomenon and brings works by these celebrated artists to the Flemish master's homeland.

After the great Rubens exhibitions in Lille, Lens and Wuppertal, one might wonder why yet another big Rubens event is being organized. Well, this time the approach is very different. We don't want to show yet another monographic overview as is customary, but instead look closely at Rubens, one of the most innovative painters in the history of art, and his immense impact on subsequent generations.

'Sensation and Sensuality' brings together some 160 works, including some iconic paintings by Rubens himself and, more particularly, works by his artistic

heirs. The show takes the visitor through six themes that explore different aspects of life and of the painter's art: violence, power, lust, compassion, elegance and poetry. Each of these chapters demonstrates the links between masterpieces by Rubens and the work of artists who came after him. The *Tiger Hunt* (Rennes) hangs alongside Delacroix's *Lion Hunt* (Stockholm) and the voluptuous *Pan and Syrinx* (Kassel) alongside Boucher's work of the same name (National Gallery, London); the *Portrait of Marchesa Maria Grimaldi and Her Dwarf* (Kingston Lacey) is juxtaposed with *A Genoese Noblewoman and Her Son* by Rubens's famous pupil Van Dyck (Washington); and Manet's Rubens pastiche *Fishing* (Metropolitan Museum, New York) can be seen alongside Rubens's *Andrians* (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm).

The twenty paintings, six oil sketches, eight drawings and ten prints by Rubens himself are presented in a dialogue with works by his artistic heirs, including Böcklin, Carpeaux, Constable, Corinth, Coppel, Daumier, Delacroix, Fragonard, Gainsborough, Géricault, Jordaens, Klimt, Kokoschka, Le Brun, Makart, Murillo, Picasso, Rembrandt, Renoir, Reynolds, Sandart, Turner, Watteau and others.

Rubens was so versatile that he appealed to artists of every nationality. Their interest was often selective. Spaniards preferred religious works. The English were inspired by his portraits and landscapes. French painters were attracted, above all, by the eroticism and poetry in his work, whereas German and Austrian artists admired his vitality and vigour. I have tried to select artists from

these countries, but inevitably some are missing due to several reasons such as budget restrictions, lending conditions and the available exhibition space. William Etty, Jacob de Wit, Gustave Courbet, Christobal de Villalpando (Mexico, 17th century) and Gustave Wappers are thus not represented. We also decided not to include sculptures although Rubens's influence is evident in artists like Georg Petel, Artus Quellinus and later Carpeaux and Rodin.

Of course there are differences in the impact Rubens had on their work. I have tried to select all possible gradations: from nearly exact copies meant as studies, to works inspired by the master but transformed into something very personal by artists such as Daumier, Landseer and Delacroix.

Many talented artists were captivated by Rubens's use of composition, colour and technique, and carved out successful careers by following his example. After meeting Rubens, Velázquez began to paint in a different way; on the master's counsel he began to use a lighter underpainting. In spite of all this evidence it is still difficult to give a clear definition of 'Rubenism', because artists could be inspired by a variety of aspects in Rubens; by the way he handled colour or composition or, most important, technique. Some artists discussed his technique in their writings.

The *Journal* of Eugène Delacroix, the *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds and the letters of Vincent van Gogh are relevant examples. Goethe, in his letters to Eckermann, remarked how Rubens managed very naturally and convincingly to render things with his brush which, in real nature, were impossible and non-existent. He refers to landscapes with trees casting shadows on different sides or paintings showing sunlight and moonlight simultaneously.

It is easy to point out the centres from which Rubens's influence spread: cities like Paris, Munich, Vienna and Dresden, with important Rubens paintings in their museums. Madrid, although it had the largest and most important holdings of all, hardly came into consideration owing to war conditions and the fact that it was not part of the Grand Tour.

When entering the exhibition, the visitor walks alongside walls filled with funny, critical, laudatory or negative statements about Rubens by artists of all ages. Rubens, a Catholic, was a problem for many German and English Protestant painters. Prudish people were shocked by so





Peter Paul Rubens, *Pan and Syrinx*, 1617. Oil on panel, 40 x 61 cm. Staatliche Museen, Kassel (Photo Ute Brunzel)

much frivolity and nakedness. In New York's renowned Frick Collection, Rubens is absent because of the supposed immorality of his oeuvre. The well-known and recurring criticism on his voluptuous ladies, on the other hand, was precisely the reason for some other artists to admire him. The French criticized his drawing, while Rubens used his unsharp contours purposefully to create atmosphere and depth.

For this exhibition some prestigious loans were obtained. Exceptionally, one of the jewels of the Prado collection in Madrid, Rubens's *Garden of Love*, will travel to Brussels, where it will be united with preparatory sketches from the Amsterdam Museum and two drawings that Rubens made of his painting for a superb print by Christopher Jegher (Metropolitan Museum, New York).

Bringing these works together allows us to see how this famous composition took shape, from idea to reproduction.

This exhibition differs from previous Rubens shows. The ones in Lille and Lens focused on the master's personality and the political and historical contexts, while the most evident aspect, his oeuvre, came second only. His masterpieces were seen as illustrations of a historical discourse and the visitor was not really encouraged to look closely at the works of art. I wanted to adjust the well-known clichés about Rubens's voluptuous women, his exaggerated colours and his notoriety as the painter of Counter-Reformation and absolutism.

Of course, as always, there is an element of truth in these commonplaces. Rubens's works *are* sensational, loud and sometimes violent. But he is also a sensitive painter in his informal and tender family portraits and a poetic one in his *Gardens of Love*, his landscapes and his pastoral scenes with peasants dancing. That kind of painting has rarely been shown, and yet it had the greatest impact on his artistic heirs. In such works Rubens was the precursor of Rococo, Romanticism and Impressionism.



Thomas Gainsborough, *Descent from the Cross*, 1766–69. Oil on canvas, 125.5 x 101.5 cm. Gainsborough's House, Sudbury (Photo Gainsborough's House, Sudbury, Suffolk)



Eugène Delacroix, *Descent from the Cross*, c. 1839. Pen and brush and brown ink on paper, 32.2 x 21.1 cm. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (Koenigs Collection) (Photo Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam/Studio Tromp, Rotterdam)

*The exhibition is on until 4 January.*  
All information on [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)



### 't Cierlijk schoon van haare veren': Noisy Parrots in the Rockox House Museum

As part of 'The Golden Cabinet' season, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts (KMSKA) and the Rockox House Museum in Antwerp are organizing a number of small-scale exhibitions.

The 'parrot exhibition' is the third in the series. Following the stunning restoration of Rubens's *Holy Family with the Parrot* (KMSKA), a work that is given pride of place in 'The Golden Cabinet' exhibition, we are turning our attention to the parrot in the pictorial art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The bird's magnificent plumage – a feast for the eye – was a source of inspiration for countless artists. Beauty, wisdom, virginity, exoticism and love are just a few of the many concepts associated with this bird. Besides Rubens's work, interpretations of the parrot by Savery, Fijt, Jordaens, De Heem, Dürer, Schongauer and other artists will also be on display. For all information: [www.rockoxhuis.be](http://www.rockoxhuis.be)

### Artus Wolffort in the Picture

Strolling through the stands at TEFAF in 2013, I saw this wonderful painting of the *Holy Trinity* by Artus Wolffort (1581–1641). It captivated me and thus prompted me to explore the oeuvre of this lesser-known Antwerp painter. Due to the many replicas of his paintings, this turned out to be a huge endeavour. Thankfully I was given the opportunity to do an internship at the Rubenianum, which proved to be a tremendous help. Using the available resources, I managed to re-create Wolffort's oeuvre and expand his records in RKDimages by approximately a hundred works. I am thankful for the invaluable information I gained for my master's thesis on the artist and can certainly recommend an internship at the Rubenianum to every art-history student interested in Flemish art. | *Joyce van Geelen, Radboud University Nijmegen*

### Flemish Renaissance Drawings in Antwerp

From 25 October to 25 January the charming Museum Mayer van den Bergh will host the exhibition 'Renaissance Drawings from Antwerp Private Collections'. This event is the result of a co-operation between the museum, Ghent University and two private collectors from Antwerp.

About 42 drawings of the sixteenth century, most of them by Antwerp masters, will be on display – a unique opportunity to see drawings that are rarely shown.

For opening hours, see [www.museummayervandenbergh.be](http://www.museummayervandenbergh.be)



Peter Paul Rubens, *The Holy Family with the Parrot* (detail).  
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp



Artus Wolffort, *The Holy Trinity*, Kunsthandel Mühlbauer

Ambrosius Francken, *The Deliberation of King Roboam*. © Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp



### In Memoriam Prof. Frances Huemer

On 4 June 2014, Prof. Em. Frances Huemer passed away at Chapel Hill, NC, at the age of 93. Born in Newark, NJ, from Austrian parents, she studied art history at New York University, where she obtained her PhD in 1959. In the same year she joined the University of North Carolina, where she spent her entire academic career.

In 1972 two events took place that shaped the rest of her intellectual activity: she received a Kress fellowship to study Rubens's portraits and was approached by the editors of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* to write part XIX, 1 of the series: *Portraits in Foreign Countries*. The book was published in 1977. Rubens continued to fascinate her until the very last days of her life, with special focus on his connection with Galileo and other Italian scholars and thinkers.

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