

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2016
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Rubenianum Fellow Elizabeth Gebauer on her research

Due to the generosity of the Rubenianum Fund and the Belgian American Educational Foundation, I have been granted the opportunity to spend the next twelve months in Antwerp while researching my dissertation *The Power of Speech: Flemish Baroque Pulpits, 1650–1750*, which I am writing under the advisement of Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann at Princeton University. The monumental *preekstoelen* initially caught my attention not only because of the abundance of curious and exuberant imagery that adorns them, but also because of their historical significance. After the iconoclastic riots in the Southern Netherlands, numerous churches commissioned new pulpits with more elaborate narrative elements, and installed them in more central positions within the naves, in order to elevate the status of the sermon. In the spirit of the Counter-Reformation, free-standing sculptures on the pulpits enact dramatic scenes from Old and New Testament stories with triumphant and hopeful messages. Some of the bases are fashioned as forest landscapes, carved to appear like grassy knolls teeming with an assortment of flora and fauna. Others resemble rocky crags supporting the lecterns, a motif that recalls the story of the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ in the Gospel of Matthew. The illusion of natural environs within the church interior reflects the increasing interest at that time in the study of nature as a path to spiritual knowledge.

I am certain that there is no better place than the Rubenianum to continue my dissertation research. Not only does it own every secondary resource relevant to my project, but it also contains many remarkable archives, such as the collections of Marguerite Casteels and Ludwig Burchard. Perusing the vast shelves of books and archival materials housed within its library was initially a bit daunting, but I quickly found that the convenience of having everything at my fingertips enables me to accomplish more in a few days than in weeks of research elsewhere. The knowledgeable archivists and librarians know the collection inside out, and are more than willing to guide me to the appropriate materials.

Having just arrived in Antwerp, I am pleased to say that I already feel entirely at home due to the especially warm welcome that I have received from the staff of the Rubenianum. I would particularly like to thank Director Véronique van de Kerckhof for her gracious hospitality, and Professor Emile Boulpaep, President of the Belgian American Educational Foundation, for offering me this incredible opportunity.

Rubens in the Caribbean

Antwerp museums have a long history of working in partnership overseas and continue to do so. Since last summer, this activity extends as far as the Caribbean. In August the cities of Antwerp and Havana signed a declaration of intent on cultural exchange and museum co-operation in a wide range of areas. The first tangible result of this intended partnership is an exhibition of seventeenth-century prints from the collections of the Rubenshuis – ‘Rubens & Antwerp in black and white / Rubens y Amberes en blanco y negro’ – which opened at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba on 16 August. Future plans include a project on the Antwerp Baroque in 2018–19.

Not only has the National Museum in Havana a rich collection of Cuban and Latin American art, it also holds an interesting and hitherto little-known collection of Dutch and Flemish art from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Part of this collection goes back to the nineteenth century. Dozens of paintings were purchased in Paris in 1840 by Pedro de Alcantara Tellez Giron y Pimentel, Prince of Anglona and Marquess of Javalquinto. He was ‘Capitan General’, or governor of the Spanish colony of Cuba. The largest expansion of the collection, however, dates from the last century, with the help of private collectors.

This Flemish collection was recently catalogued by the Belgian art historian Jonas Slegers and his Cuban colleague Oscar Antuna Benitez. The resulting publication, *La Pintura Flamenca en el Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba*, was jointly financed by the Antwerp Art Gallery Verbeeck-Van Dyck, the Flemish Ministry of Culture and the City of Antwerp. However, these activities have a wider impact beyond the cultural output. Museums and cultural heritage institutions have a role in economic growth and investment, cultural exchange, the preservation of memory and exploration of identity, and in diplomacy.

Philip Heylen
Vice-Mayor for Culture, Economy,
City Maintenance and Property Management



Photo © Rthe Suykens

Elizabeth Gebauer in front of Lodewijk Willemsens's baroque pulpit in Antwerp's St Jacob's Church

Financial Overview of the Rubenianum Fund

Earlier this year, a special issue of the *Rubenianum Quarterly* was published. It was a 'Midterm Report' of our Fund that chronicled our achievements since 2010 and looked forward to the programme for the next five years, till the planned completion of the *Corpus Rubenianum* in 2020. This brochure coincided with the launch of a new

fundraising campaign. Indeed, by early this year the Rubenianum Fund had raised some 1,970,000 euros (funds effectively received as well as committed). This was still short by 1,530,000 euros of our target of 3,500,000 euros which is estimated as the total amount needed for the full period.

Since then many donors have given additional amounts or committed to further donations. In addition, a number of new donors have joined our group. All in all, the total commitments have been raised by some 400,000 euros. This is most encouraging, and it was especially heartening to see that many of our existing donors were found ready to contribute again. We thank them very much for their generosity.

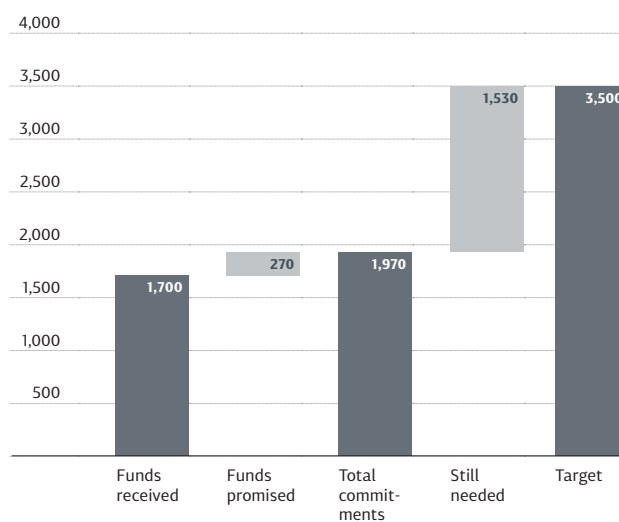
Nevertheless, this leaves us still some 1,100,000 euros short of our target. Some Foundation Boards are currently considering additional grants, and we are hopeful to hear from them by year-end 2016. At the same time, we encourage all our readers and contacts to help us along by suggesting new potential avenues and promoting the cause of the Rubenianum Fund in all appropriate quarters. At present, we have sufficient funds to continue the operation till early 2018, so there is only a little more than a year left for us to raise further significant amounts to ensure continuity. We really count on the help of all who cherish the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*.

We are more than happy to send you all supporting materials (brochures, information about tax deductibility, etc.) by mail upon simple request to martine.menten@kbc.be.

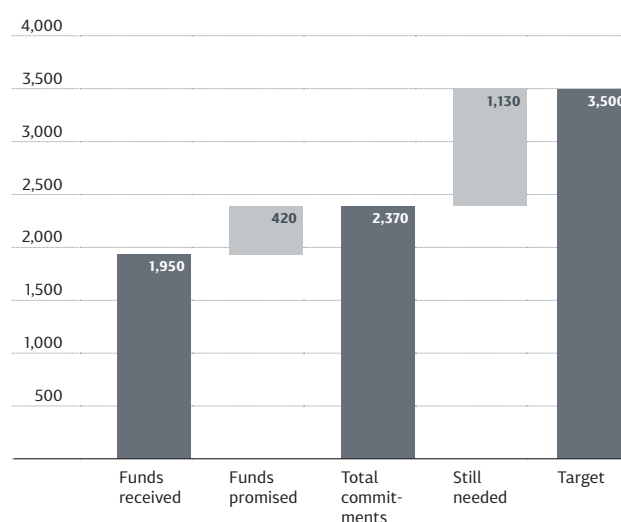
Thomas Leysen



Situation March 2016



Situation September 2016



Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard XXVII (1) Works in Collaboration: Brueghel I & II

Christine Van Mulders



Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel I, *Mars Disarmed by Venus*, c. 1615. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel I were collaborating as painters as early as about 1597/98, before Rubens's stay in Italy. The most important period of their alliance stretches from 1609 to 1621. After the death of Jan Brueghel I in 1625, his son Jan Brueghel II continued the partnership with Rubens until the latter's death in 1640. The corpus of paintings made by Rubens in collaboration with Jan Brueghel I comprises some forty works, which can be roughly divided into three categories: floral wreaths or garlands, usually enclosing a religious image, interiors with mostly allegorical scenes, and landscapes with historical subjects. Their compositions served as models for replicas, copies and variants painted by Jan Brueghel II, often working together with Rubens, as well as by workshop assistants and artists from the circle of the two painters. The study of the creative process underlying the collaborative efforts of Rubens and Jan Brueghel I falls within the broader context of partnerships between independent artists in general. In order to understand how the Rubens-Brueghel collaboration came into being and gave rise to their unique 'brand', we first need to examine these partnerships generally.

Organizational and institutional mechanism for painters

The earliest forms of teamwork involving two or more independent masters, though relatively rare at the time, go back to the first quarter of the sixteenth century, when specialization and the development of various

new genres in painting occasionally called for collaboration between painters. Thus Joachim Patinir, himself a skilled landscape painter, regularly joined forces with figure painters such as his close friend Quinten Massijs. From the middle of the sixteenth century, the growing number of genres encouraged ever greater specialization among artists. This in turn fuelled the need for production units based on creative partnerships between artists. During the first half of the seventeenth century the practice of collaboration became more and more established. The institutional framework did not stand in the way of independent collaboration. The Guild of St Luke provided no specific guidelines for temporary production units of this kind. This is somewhat surprising, given that the seventeenth-century Antwerp trend towards efficient specialization and collaboration meant that such units became a typical mode of artistic activity. The strict guild system created, on the other hand, a collegiate atmosphere among its members. That collaboration between independent artists was implicitly recognized by the Guild of St Luke is clear, for instance, from the large number of deans who regularly took part in collaborative projects of this type.

Cultural and socio-economic mechanisms

When considering the cultural and socio-economic context, we need to take into account the different ways in which value was attached to paintings in seventeenth-

century Antwerp society. Artists collaborated at different levels, which to some extent reflected their social status. In collaborations of the so-called low-level kind, 'second-rate' artists were driven purely by opportunistic considerations. Because specialization forced artists to become proficient in one skill to the exclusion of others, collaboration was a necessity. Moreover, a substantial amount of work could be produced in a relatively short space of time. Evidently, Brueghel and Rubens belonged in the category of 'high-level' collaborations. The rising value and growing success of their joint output was determined first and foremost by the quality of the paintings produced. If two such eminent artists as Brueghel and Rubens each combined their greatest skills in one work, the result was naturally of the highest order. Furthermore, the value and success of these works depended largely on the high socio-cultural status of the contributing artists, in this case Brueghel and Rubens. The growing interest of seventeenth-century viewers in the question of authorship in general, and the new role and social status of the connoisseur that came with this curiosity, created a fashion for *looking* and for identifying the different hands involved.

The artists

Given that Rubens and Brueghel were highly successful in their own right, there was no reason for them to team up other than a desire to consolidate their friendship in their work. We know that the two men admired each other and so must have had a strong personal incentive to work together. Both were renowned for their exceptional artistic qualities and both belonged to Antwerp's circle of elite artists at the time, earning them a position of respect among their peers. They were thus part of the same artistic community and moved in the same circuits, sharing many social contacts and enjoying more or less equal status. Consequently, they frequently also worked for the same courtly and diplomatic patrons. Without doubt, their overlapping or intersecting lives created the perfect environment for a cordial working relationship. These circumstances contributed to the success and exclusive character of their collaborative output. The combination of their talents meant that each part of a composition could be worked out with the utmost skill. Only thus was it possible to produce pieces that were at once almost perfectly executed, beautifully harmonious and richly varied in style. The fact that the authors frequently kept the original or 'prime' versions for their own collections shows that they rated these works very highly themselves.

The clientele

The most important phase in the collaboration between Rubens and Jan Brueghel I is the period between 1609 and 1621. It seems almost inevitable that the artists would resume their partnership when Rubens returned from Italy. The perfect opportunity to rekindle their alliance presented itself when their work brought them together at the archducal court. Brueghel was regularly asked to produce work for the archdukes from 1606 onwards, and Rubens was appointed court painter in 1609. The earliest work that can possibly be connected with the archdukes is *The Feast of Achelöus* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) of about 1614–15. *Mars Disarmed by Venus* (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) and *The Garden of Eden with the Fall of Man* (The Hague, Mauritshuis), which were probably in the collections of, respectively, Firante Spinelli in Naples (1654) and Johan de Bye in Leiden (1666), date from circa 1615. Rubens and Brueghel next produced a series of Madonnas in flower garlands, an early example of which, from 1616–17, can be seen depicted as part

of the archducal collection in the *Allegory of Sight* (Prado, Madrid). In the same years, they produced a smaller variant for Cardinal Federico Borromeo (Louvre, Paris). Dating from about 1617 is the *Virgin and Child in a Flower Garland surrounded by Angels* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), possibly commissioned by George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, or acquired by him soon after it was finished.

A highlight in the collaborative output of Rubens and Jan Brueghel I is the five-part series of the *Allegories of the Senses* of 1617–18 (Prado, Madrid). The iconography and artistic quality of this cycle are truly exceptional. Each scene depicts a personification of one of the Five Senses in a courtly setting. The archdukes probably gave these paintings to Elector Palatine Wolfgang Wilhelm of Pfalz-Neuburg, their most important ally within the Catholic alliance. Evidently patronage was an important factor in the creation of such highly prestigious works; popes, papal nuncios, princes, dukes, diplomats and nobles frequently acted as patrons. For the period

New York revisited

Ben van Beneden

In the previous issue of *The Rubenianum Quarterly*, readers were informed about the successful Rubenianum Fund art-study trip to New York in May (TRQ 2016/2, pp. 3–4). Among the highlights of the trip were two once-in-a-generation exhibitions in which the Rubenshuis proudly participated with major loans. One was 'Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible', the ambitious inaugural exhibition of The Met Breuer. The other was 'Van Dyck: The Anatomy of Portraiture' on view at the Frick Collection. Both 'Van Dyck' and 'Unfinished' turned out to be revelatory – but contrasting – exhibitions, full of surprises.

The smaller of the two was a beautiful, rigorous and intimate close-up of Anthony van Dyck's approach to portraiture. In unpacking the *modus operandi* of a master portraitist, the exhibition offered both intellectual revelation and visual delight. On display was an astonishing series of works: preparatory drawings and oil sketches that shed light on Van Dyck's working process (fig.), as well as prints and painted portraits. Its rare and outstanding loans included *Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio*, which has been one of the glories of the Medici collections in Florence since the seventeenth century. Painted in Rome shortly after Van Dyck left Antwerp (and Rubens's studio) to study the work of Italian artists, *Bentivoglio* is the quintessential baroque portrait, perhaps rivalled only by the masterly portrait that Velázquez made of Pope Innocent X (Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome).

Leaning out provocatively to greet us as we entered were two examples of Van Dyck's precociousness: the daring *Self-Portrait*

(c. 1613–15) from Vienna alongside the Rubenshuis self-portrait, in which Van Dyck demonstrates his skill as the perfect Rubens replicant. The interplay between these two portraits of dramatic self-invention was alone worth the trip to New York. In this city of modern art, Van Dyck looked more effortlessly cool, nimble and sparkling than ever.

Unlike the Frick, which is one of the finest small museums in the world, the Metropolitan Museum's new outpost on Madison Avenue – the 1966 stone and concrete building designed by Marcel Breuer (formerly the Whitney Museum of Art) – is not a temple, but rather a bunker of art. But there were some wonderful things to see inside this brutalist box.

Guided by the theme of 'Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible', this monumental show offered a historical survey of incompleteness in art from the fifteenth century to the present. Filling two entire floors with over 200 works, this sprawling effort proved most exciting in its early sections, where it combined numerous works from the Met's collection with spectacular loans that startled the eye, exposed technical secrets, and let us watch the creative process unfold. The show began to lose momentum, however, towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The exhibition opened with *The Flying of Marsyas*, Titian's last work, executed shortly before his death from the plague in 1576. The following room featured drawings by Michelangelo and Leonardo next to unfinished paintings by Jan van Eyck and Albrecht Dürer that reveal their underdrawings, all lined up in one exquisite row. And beyond these hung Rubens's magnificent *Henri IV at the Battle of Ivry* (Rubenshuis, Antwerp). Some of these pieces are indeed unfinished, but just as many, such as Titian's *Marsyas*, are not. So who decides



Anthony van Dyck, *Head Study of a Brussels Magistrate*. Private collection, on longer-term loan to the Rubenshuis

whether a work is complete – the artist, the patron, curators or posterity? More than once, patrons have tried to return works they suspected of being unfinished, but Rembrandt, for example, insisted that he was the one to judge whether or not a work was finished.

In the sections on modern and contemporary art, the 'unfinished' category did become increasingly arbitrary and so did the selection, as artists of varying significance were grouped together more or less as equals.

At times, the parade of masterpieces in 'Unfinished' felt excessive and incoherent. It raised more questions than it answered, but at least it was a feast for the eyes.

that follows, 1621–25, the regular clientele increased steadily – a development that was undoubtedly fuelled after the death of Archduke Albert by the growing number of diplomatic missions undertaken by Rubens, which allowed him to develop new contacts. Rubens and Brueghel's joint output for this period is marked by the emergence of landscapes with history scenes, including *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene*, *The Road to Emmaus* and landscapes with Pan and Syrinx and Diana. Following the death of his father, Jan Brueghel II responded to the needs of a growing clientele. The art trade and annual markets played an important role in the popularization of partnerships between independent masters. The large demand precipitated a thriving industry in copies, which in the case of Jan Brueghel II was frequently supported by the artist himself. A key role in this development was played by the dealers Mattijs Musson, Fourmenois, Forchondt, and Goetkint & Van Immerseel.

Rubeniana



Michael Sweerts, *Clothing the Naked*, c. 1661, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York / www.metmuseum.org. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 1984

Archive of research material on Michael Sweerts donated to the Rubenianum

We are delighted to announce that Lindsey Shaw-Miller has donated her archive of research materials on Michael Sweerts (1618–1664) to the Rubenianum. Shaw-Miller researched the life and work of Sweerts while holding the Edward Speelman Fellowship at Wolfson College, Cambridge, in 1996–2000. Aspects of her research have recently been published in her essay "Beautiful Secrets": Poetical Disclosure in the Work of Michael Sweerts (1618–64)' in the Brepols volume *The Low Countries and the Fens: Cambridge and Netherlandish Art*. The research material includes the archive of the late English

scholar-dealer Malcolm Waddingham (1927–2014).

Shaw-Miller decided she would like younger scholars to have the use of these research materials and is pleased to give them a home at the Rubenianum and thereby make them accessible. We are excited to add a research archive on such an influential artist as Sweerts to our holdings and expect it to be of great interest to many researchers. The archive will be transported to Antwerp in January 2017. We are most grateful to Lindsey Shaw-Miller for this generous donation and to Lara Yeager-Crasselt for her help in facilitating this gift.

Collection Horst Vey: progress report

In 2010 this newsletter reported the acquisition of the Van Dyck documentation of the late Dr Horst Vey. Today we are pleased to announce that this interesting collection is now fully inventoried and available in our online database.

The archive consists of correspondence, artwork documentation and excerpts of literature in preparation for the authoritative catalogue raisonné of 2004, which Horst Vey considered to be a standard for future attributions that could stand for at least a century. Vey continued completing this

documentation until shortly before his death. Because the prominent researcher was often approached to make an appeal to his expertise – as a result of which he once called himself the 'Van Dyck oracle' – the documentation contains a lot of information on attributions and private collections.

Not only does this archive provide a clear insight into the decennial project of the catalogue raisonné, it also tells the life stories of the authors. Reading Vey's letters evokes, even for those who didn't know him personally, a fine image of this gentle and clever man.

The Rubenianum Lectures

Sunday, 18 December 2016, 11 am

DR PETRA MACLOT

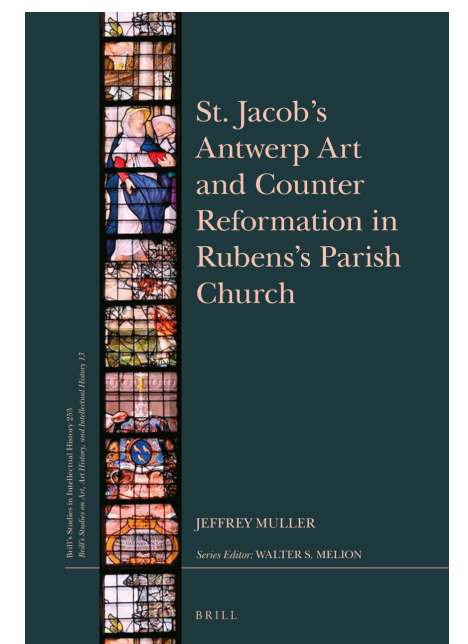
Where in Antwerp lived and worked the numerous artists during the 16th and 17th centuries? A historical search through archives and ancient houses

In the early modern period, hundreds of artists lived and worked in houses and studios in Antwerp. Some were well-known and sumptuous, such as the famous dwellings of Frans Floris, Rubens and Jordaens. But there is much more to discover, as Dr Maclot will demonstrate on the basis of her interdisciplinary research.

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

New reference work on St Jacob's Church released

Jeffrey Muller's long-awaited study of the artistic decoration and social-religious context of one of Antwerp's most famous and intact monumental churches has recently been published by Brill. An indispensable source for art historians and historians, and more generally for all scholars and readers interested in early modern Antwerp art production and society, the book will be launched officially on 7 October at the Rubenianum.



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