

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2017
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The Sky is the Limit. Rockoxhuis shows landscape paintings from the Low Countries. Until 2 July 2017

'Artists from the Netherlands always gain praise with landscape, while Italians know how to paint people and gods', Karel van Mander wrote in his famous *Schilder-boeck* in 1604. No wonder people from the Low Countries developed a skill for depicting landscapes, surrounded as they are by endless horizons in which – with thanks to Jacques Brel – 'cathedrals are the only mountains'. Then imagine the enormous shock it must have been for people from that flat land to travel through the Alps on their way to Italy. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, northern artists travelled south to discover the marvellous findings from the antique world and experience the roaring Renaissance. Not only did they bring back drawings after the antique masterpieces, they also drew the enormous mountains with meandering rivers in between, which they contemplated during their journey.

Gradually throughout the sixteenth century the distant views through the windows in the paintings by the 'Flemish Primitives' became a genre in their own right. Pioneers such as Joachim Patinir (c. 1475/80–1524) combined a grand panorama with minute detail for the houses and textures of the rocks and trees, while a century later Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) evoked more tangible landscapes with wild brushstrokes and vibrant colour.

This evolution is shown in a selection of the finest landscapes from the Rockoxhuis, KMSK Antwerp and the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, which held a major landscape exhibition late in 2016. As a former Project Associate to the Rubenianum, I contributed to the preparatory research on the oeuvres of landscape painters such as Gillis van Coninxloo and Paul Bril leading to new attributions, two of which will be on display. No better environment can be found to explore these historic horizons as the Rockoxhuis, the home of former mayor of Antwerp and notorious art collector Nicolaes Rockox (1560–1640), who himself had several 'landschapkens' in his collection. | *Elise Boutsen*



Photo: © Lulias – Art in Flanders vzw (www.luliasweb.be/) Hugo Maertens

Paul Bril, *Landscape*. Oil on canvas, 91 x 138 cm.
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerp, inv. 974

A splendid spring: Rubens's garden screen and garden pavilion to be restored

In 1610, Peter Paul Rubens and his first wife, Isabella Brant, signed the deed of purchase for a house and grounds on the Wapper. In the following years the artist had the premises extended to include a semicircular, domed sculpture gallery (the 'elegantissimo Museo'), a spacious studio, a screen in the form of a Roman triumphal arch and a garden pavilion, the façade of which was designed as a serliana (after the Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio). In designing the extension to his house, Rubens drew inspiration from the architecture of antiquity and from such sixteenth-century painter-architects as Raphael, Michelangelo and Giulio Romano, whose work he had studied thoroughly in Italy. Only two elements of Rubens's original design survive: the screen that forms the impressive passageway to the garden, and the garden pavilion, the focal point of the view through the central arch, which Rubens conceived as a spectacular garden perspective. Both structures have, however, suffered serious damage over the years, owing to natural weathering and environmental pollution. The stone reliefs and other sculptural ornaments, too, are clearly in need of restoration or conservation. The urgency of such measures is obvious. It therefore gives me great pleasure to announce that the restoration of the garden pavilion will commence this spring. With the help of Fortuna (and the goodwill of the Prime Minister of Flanders), the restoration of the screen will also begin later this year. The architectural and historical significance of these two structures can scarcely be overestimated. Not only are the screen and the garden pavilion rare examples of Rubens's architectural endeavours, but they also constitute rock-solid proof of his extraordinary erudition and versatility. The restoration of these vital structures is therefore of great importance to the Rubenshuis and forms the perfect prelude to the upcoming festival 'Antwerp Baroque 2018'. It already promises to be a splendid spring.

Ben van Beneden
Director Rubenshuis

Brecht Vanoppen

Another precious collaborator at the Rubenianum introduces himself



After years of hiding in the documentation of the Rubenianum, building fortifications of massed piles of books on my desk, and urging visiting scholars and other new colleagues go before me, I have, alas, been caught by the editors of the *Rubenianum Quarterly* who have prevailed upon me to write something about myself. As there seemed to be no chance of escaping, I thought I might as well give it a try.

I studied art history at the University of Leuven and was given my first working experience in the Rubenianum – now in fact more than three years ago – as an intern. Eager to get away from the study benches and finally work in the field, I asked if the Rubenianum would like to have me two months instead of one, as was specified in the university intern contract. Luckily, that was the case. It has been quite a while since, so apart from reorganizing the Rubens documentation and organizing an art evaluation day for the public, I cannot really remember what I did. But I must have done something right, as I was asked to stay on board as a volunteer and afterwards as a student trainee. After my graduation Lieneke Nijkamp asked me what I had in mind for the future. Knowing that I very much wanted to find a job in the field, she introduced me to Michel Ceuterick, who was looking for a collaborator with whom to embark on a project to catalogue the complete painted oeuvre of Jacob Jordaens.

My job on the Jordaens project was to compile all available information on Jordaens's works in a database. This I did at the Rubenianum, which was very supportive of the project and allowed me to freely browse the shelves as a visiting

scholar. The extensive documentation on Jordaens that has been put together by Ludwig Burchard, Roger d'Hulst, and the curators of the documentation in the Rubenianum, was not only very useful to the project but also educational to me. Moreover, studying photos of Jordaens's works all day and every day, and regularly being taken out on field trips by Michel and Gregory Martin, the second pillar of the project, allowed me to develop a connoisseur's eye for the master. Eventually I was asked also to write part of the catalogue, a proposition that I gladly accepted.

Although I was working frantically on the Jordaens project, I still had some spare time left and wanted to invest it in acquiring even more experience in the field. It was then that Prisca Valkeneers suggested I come to work as a volunteer for the Centrum Rubenianum and assist in the editing of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*. One thing led to another and four months later, at the beginning of 2016, I officially joined the editorial team. As an editor of the CRLB my main task is to order images and make up the layout for our forthcoming volumes. Aside from that I also assist the authors in their research, read and edit the manuscripts according to our style guidelines, compile the indexes and bibliography, maintain the communication with the printers, and many other things. Truly, the publication of Rubens's oeuvre is proving no easy or straightforward task and I am very glad that I can share the more than enormous workload with my dear colleagues Bert Schepers and Isabelle Van Tichelen. Among the three of us I am sure that we will succeed in this undertaking – one

which now far exceeds anything Ludwig Burchard could ever have dreamt of in its diversity of subject and vastness of scale. Luckily, at the end of the day, when I have had more than enough of Rubens, continuing to work on the Jordaens project feels like absolute relaxation.

Without any doubt I have had the best jobs I could have wished for as a start in my working life. In my eyes I owe it all to certain people who have supported me through every bit of it and have steered me in the right direction. So now that I have to write things down, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Lieneke, Michel and Prisca, for I would surely not be having my daily chocolate-milk break at 11 o'clock in the Rubenianum if it wasn't for them.

The Rubenianum Lectures

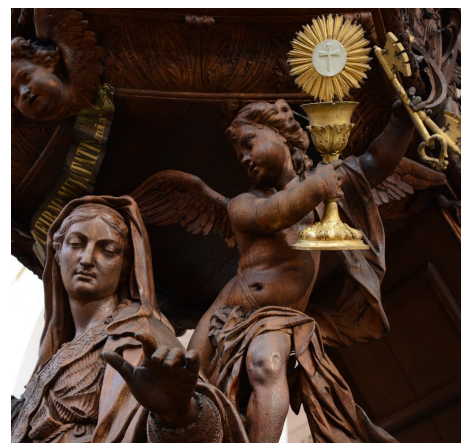
Sunday, 18 June 2017, 11 am

ELIZABETH GEBAUER
Rubenianum Fellow 2016–17,
Princeton University

**Carving Preekstoelen:
Antwerp Sculptors and the Development
of the Counter-Reformation Pulpit**

The first pulpit in the Southern Netherlands known to have life-size figures was carved by a member of the circle of Rubens in 1627 for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp. Taking this lost but masterly wooden structure as a starting point, Elizabeth Gebauer will present her research of the rich Antwerp production of Baroque pulpits, characterized by biblical tableaux vivants set amid lush flora and diverse fauna.

The lecture is in English and takes place at the Rubenianum.



Antwerp Baroque 2018. Rubens as an inspiration

The cultural city festival 'Antwerp Baroque 2018. Rubens as an inspiration' pays tribute to Peter Paul Rubens and his cultural legacy.

The embodiment of Baroque and an icon for Antwerp, Rubens brought a new pictorial language to the Low Countries and continues to be a part of the city. More than fifty of his works are permanently on display in Antwerp, while he also literally left his mark on the city with architectural showpieces such as the Jesuit Church (St Charles Borromeo) and the Rubens House.

Even today, Rubens is an important source of inspiration for contemporary artists and the atypical lifestyle of the city and its inhabitants. In his wake Antwerp artists continue to open up new horizons and to innovate. The Baroque festival brings Rubens's historic Baroque into dialogue with contemporary visual artists, including Jan Fabre, Luc Tuymans

and Tony Le Duc. This encounter is bound to result in promising exhibitions, performances and events with new artistic creations, including some which will become a permanent part of the city.

The cultural programme tells the tale of Baroque, both past and present. But the city and the world, in all their diversity, were and are the true setting. Visitors do not just discover Rubens's Baroque legacy in the arts, but also in the Antwerp *joie de vivre*.

The festival runs from June 2018 until January 2019 and is aiming for international top quality, surprises and innovation. The City of Antwerp and Toerisme Vlaanderen are putting together a core programme that consists of different exhibitions in which Rubens and the Baroque serve as an impressive backdrop and inspiration for contemporary artists. The exhibitions will not be confined to the safe haven of the

museum, but will also overrun the city's public spaces, immersing both tourists and residents in the Baroque experience wherever they go.

Let us focus on some of the planned exhibitions.

CLOSER TO BAROQUE

MAS (Museum aan de Stroom), in collaboration with the Rubenshuis, 28 September 2018–13 January 2019

This exhibition lets the public take a look at the teeming, frenzied creativity of Baroque art from a different perspective. For alongside the grandiose, opulent and theatrical side, there is also a less familiar, intimate side to the living environment and art production of the past. The exhibition aims to illustrate how works of art and luxury goods played an important role in religious and political propaganda, but also how they functioned as exponents of social status in daily life, offering the visitor a glimpse of the story behind the scenes of the multi-faceted seventeenth-century culture.

RUBENS BOOK DESIGNER

Museum Plantin-Moretus, 28 September 2018–6 January 2019

During the Baroque festival the Plantin-Moretus Museum focuses on seventeenth-century book design and Rubens in particular. Balthasar I Moretus, grandson of Christophe Plantin, and his childhood friend Peter Paul Rubens together created the Baroque book. This fruitful collaboration illustrates the stimulating exchange between publisher and artist.

The exhibition will show original designs by Peter Paul Rubens and other seventeenth-century artists alongside contemporary creations.

MONUMENTAL CHURCHES OF ANTWERP

1 June–31 December 2018

Antwerp has five monumental churches where the Baroque and Rubens's living environment come to life *in situ* – the majestic Cathedral of Our Lady, St Paul's Church, St Andrew's, St Charles Borromeo and the recently restored St James's Church. These churches were among the most avid patrons of Rubens and his contemporaries. In 2018 this permanent display will be brought even closer to the visitor through contemporary interventions, from visual art to dance and music. St Andrew's focuses on



'Closer to Baroque': Willem van Haecht, *Kunstkamer of Cornelis van der Geest*, 1628 (detail). Rubenshuis, Antwerp



'Michaelina': Michaelina Wautier, *Bacchanal*. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

contemporary design of chasubles. DNA analyses are being carried out in Rubens's burial chapel in the hope of making his biography even more complete... A walk past these churches immerses the visitor in a wonderful world of fine arts, inspiration and admiration.

MICHAELINA

Rubenshuis, 1 June–2 September 2018

The Rubenshuis is putting on the very first retrospective of the oeuvre of Michaelina Wautier (1614–1689), thus demonstrating the exceptional talent of an artist who made a name for herself at a time when female artists were few and far between. More on page 5.

'COKERYEN'

Rockoxhuis & Snydershuis,
28 September 2018–13 January 2019

The Antwerp Baroque painter Frans Snyders (1579–1657) is famous for his imposing hunting scenes, gamepieces, market scenes and still lifes. Like Frans Snyders, whose house will open to the public in 2018, culinary photographer Tony Le Duc has a keen eye for attractive compositions. He works magic with colour and raises basic food to the level of art. The exhibition 'Cokeryen' will contrast a selection of his own photographs with works by Snyders and his contemporaries.

DESIGNED BY RUBENS

Rubenshuis, Autumn 2019

'Designed by Rubens' focuses on a remarkable aspect of the work of this multi-faceted artist: Rubens as designer of luxurious and exclusive *objets d'art* in expensive materials such as silver, ivory and bronze. During his stay in Italy, Rubens first laid eyes on objects designed by Raphael (1483–1520) and Giulio Romano (ca. 1499–1546). Back in

Antwerp in his studio, he took up the artistic challenge of drawing designs for expensive showpieces, the execution of which he left to young, talented sculptor friends, such as the German Georg Petel (1601/02–1634) and the Flemings Artus Quellinus I (1609–1668) and Lucas Faydherbe (1617–1697). A scientific publication, the first ever dedicated to this subject, will accompany the exhibition.



'Cokeryen': Frans Snyders, *Still Life*. Rockoxhuis, Antwerp

Project Ludwig Burchard II

Tracing Burchard's footsteps through the archives

As announced earlier (TRQ 2016/1) the Rubenianum is dedicating another project to Ludwig Burchard's archival material thanks to a generous donation. Since we are currently halfway through this project, it seemed the right time to highlight some of the results. Part of the project entailed a detailed description of Burchard's notebooks (122) and appointment diaries (44), which are now available through our archival database. These objects reveal Burchard's ambitious itinerary: his many travels within Europe and countless visits to museums, private collections, libraries and churches. By leafing through the pages of these delicate objects, we find notes on artworks he scrutinized on the spot as well as appointments with illustrious experts from a previous generation.

Some of you may know that Frans Baudouin – former and first curator of both the Rubenshuis and the Rubenianum – was instrumental in securing Burchard's legacy in Antwerp. The two men first met in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Burchard visited the museum on 25 February 1949 when Baudouin was working in the paintings department. Burchard was highly impressed by Baudouin's sound knowledge of Flemish art and would recommend him to the City of Antwerp for the job of curator of the Rubenshuis within the same year. We have several archival objects



that testify to this decisive moment. From Burchard's appointment diary of 1949 we learn that he went for lunch that day with 'Mr Gold (Nat. Gal.), Mr Baudouin & Van Schendel'. In his notebook of 1948–49 Burchard describes the Flemish pictures he studied at the Rijksmuseum, acknowledging Baudouin's observations ('Beobachtung von Mr. Baudouin'). A draft of the letter of recommendation Burchard wrote to the Antwerp municipality can be found in our correspondence archive.

A few years later Burchard visited the Netherlands again. Museum Boijmans in Rotterdam staged an exhibition on Rubens oil sketches in 1953–54, and Burchard had been in touch with both director J.C. Ebbinge Wubbe and curator Egbert Haverkamp-

Begemann as he was involved as adviser as well as lender of several panels from his own art collection. In this case, we have not only notebooks and letters that attest to this moment in time, but also Burchard's own copy of the exhibition catalogue, which is scattered with notes on the works on display. Burchard took it with him through the exhibition: a label on the first page states that the publication served as a free entrance ticket.

Archival objects such as these constitute a rich resource for art historians, while also offering an interesting context to the art-historical practice of the early twentieth century. We can retrace Burchard's footsteps, unravel his network and look over his shoulder while he contemplates art. Frans Baudouin, who curated Burchard's archival collection for more than thirty years, thankfully used Burchard's notes in his own research, as did many experts and authors of the *Corpus Rubenianum* after him. We hope that by making more detailed inventories available, this wealth of information will not go unnoticed to a future generation of experts, and that current *Corpus* authors and researchers alike will benefit from these new finding aids to our collections. | *Lieneke Nijkamp & Dirk Buelens*

'Michaelina' Exhibition

Rubenshuis, Antwerp, 1 June–2 September 2018

In 2018 the extraordinary exhibition 'Michaelina' will be held at the Rubenshuis. The exquisite and extremely varied oeuvre of the rather unknown but unique female artist Michaelina Wautier (1614–1689) will be presented for the very first time. Prints and drawings but first and foremost paintings will illustrate the exceptional talent of this mysterious woman, who lived and worked in Brussels around 1650. The different genres in Wautier's oeuvre, ranging from still lifes and genre scenes to portraits and history paintings, will indicate her exceptional position as a female artist in the seventeenth century. In this exhibition, curator Prof. Katlijne Van der Stighelen (University of Leuven) presents the results of her extensive research on the artist. The exhibition is organized in the context of the cultural city festival 'Antwerp Baroque 2018. Rubens as an inspiration'. | *Hannelore Magnus*



Michaelina Wautier, *Two Girls Presented as Saint Agnes and Saint Dorothea*. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerp, inv. 599

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