

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2018
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Rubens Oil Sketches in Rotterdam

'Pure Rubens', the first survey of Rubens's oil sketches in Europe for sixty-five years, can be seen in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam from 8 September 2018 to 13 January 2019. The exhibition has been organized in association with the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, where it was shown from April to August of this year.

Peter Paul Rubens can be considered the most important painter of sketches in European art. He was the first to prepare almost all of his large paintings systematically by making sketches in colour, in oil paint, and nearly always on panel. Rubens's oil sketches were essentially a new form of painting. Most of them were made in preparation of paintings but Rubens also used them to design tapestries, sculptures, prints, tableware and architecture. He cherished his sketches, showing them to clients and fellow artists, and kept them in his own house; they were not for sale. It was only after his death that the sketches came on to the market and were highly sought after by painters and collectors. By the end of the nineteenth century Rubens's sketches had become almost more popular than his finished paintings. Under the influence of Romanticism and Impressionism, modern viewers saw the 'unfinished' character of the sketches in a new light.

More than sixty-five of Rubens's oil sketches are on view in the exhibition, which gives a survey of the artist's staggering productivity and versatility. Starting from his early sketches in Italy, the exhibition pays attention to all important aspects of Rubens's oeuvre, including his oil sketches for altarpieces and large commissions such as the series for Maria de' Medici, Henry IV, the Antwerp Jesuit church and the Banqueting House in London. The core of the show comprises the important holdings of Rubens sketches of the two organizing museums, including iconic works for the tapestry series of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid, the Achilles series and the series of mythological paintings he made for the Torre de la Parada, Philip IV's hunting lodge near Madrid. This group is supplemented with loans from private collections and museums all over the world, among them the Louvre in Paris, the National Gallery in London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. *Friso Lammertse*



Peter Paul Rubens, *The Lion Hunt*, c.1615. Oil on panel, 73.6 × 105.4 cm. The National Gallery, London

Moving forward, together

In 2017, the Rubenianum and the Rubens House submitted their plan for 2019–23. Building on current strengths and new ambitions, this plan is more than ever based on mutual synergy. It is extremely rewarding that we can now move from a stage of dreams to the realization of our common goals: indeed, the Flemish Minister for Culture has granted our institutions an extra 60% of subsidies for the next five years. Among the projects we wish to realize features significant support for the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard in its final stretch to completion. As always, you will read of our accomplishments in this newsletter.

In all this, collaboration with our network of partners remains crucial. The work to be done on Rubens and Flemish art is so vast, and the research community so international, that expanding this network and forging new partnerships is the only way forward to better serve our communities and, indeed, art history. In this regard, we were thrilled with the announcement, in 2017, of the Center for Netherlandish Art, founded at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston with generous financial support from MFA's patrons Rose-Marie and Eijk de Mol van Otterloo and Susan and Matthew Weatherbie – whom we gratefully have welcomed as members of the Rubenianum Fund too. In anticipation of the CNA's start-up in 2020, it is of vital importance to set up a dialogue on mutual goals and Transatlantic exchange with this distinct new player in the field of early modern Dutch and Flemish art. We are therefore very pleased that, with the generous support of the Flemish Minister-President, we may officially welcome CNA's representatives later this year at the Rubenianum and the RKD – Netherlands Institute of Art History. Joining forces always gives greater impetus to our endeavours.

*Véronique Van de Kerckhof
Director of the Rubenianum*

Interview with Dominique Allard *'Getting people on side for something beautiful'*

Ben van Beneden

Dominique Allard has been director of the King Baudouin Foundation since 1996. Not only has the KBF grown strongly since then, Dominique has also laid the foundations of its Centre for Philanthropy, which he initially began alone as a challenge, but which has developed into a successful venture with a team of highly motivated colleagues. His many contacts with philanthropists and patrons kindled his interest in heritage and led him to explore the fascinating phenomenon of collecting.

What is the King Baudouin Foundation exactly, Dominique?

The KBF was established in 1976 to mark the Silver Jubilee of King Baudouin (1930–1993). The King had in mind a neutral and pluralist institution that would be open to social changes and committed to addressing social issues. Something, in short, that would help make the world a better place. This would naturally occur in consultation with the government and, above all, with experts and people with direct experience in the relevant fields. Over the years, the KBF has built up ample experience and expertise of its own in the area of philanthropy and patronage. Briefly, it acts primarily as a facilitator, connecting philanthropists and patrons with projects. It has developed a variety of tools to that end, while also opening up its extensive network and offering logistical support for the legal, fiscal and administrative aspects. Donations to the KBF are tax deductible, for instance, and not only in Belgium but also in the case of gifts from other European countries and the United States. So private individuals benefit by donating for the common good.

The Rubenianum Fund is part of the King Baudouin Foundation too, isn't it?

The Rubenianum Fund was one of the first heritage charities to be set up by patrons of the arts with a view to raising money for a specific project. It has proved highly successful and has gone on to inspire lots of other initiatives. Raising almost four million euros for an art-historical project in the space of ten years was a big ask, but the Rubenianum Fund is on the brink of achieving it. Apart from the Centrum Rubenianum, other cultural institutions such as M – Museum in Leuven and, recently, the Erfgoedbibliotheek (Heritage Library) in Antwerp, have also opted for a partnership with the KBF.

To what do you attribute the Fund's success?

First and foremost, the Rubenianum Fund owes its success to the unconditional commitment of a passionate leader, who contributes financially himself and does not hesitate to draw on his immense network. Thomas Leysen's personal motivation and his unbridled passion for Rubens and his era have been the driving force behind the project. At the same time, he has managed

to surround himself with other *passionati* with networks of their own. The greatest effort by far has been invested in recruiting and energizing patrons, which has succeeded brilliantly: getting people on side for something beautiful really works! Regular feedback also needs to be provided, of course, to donors and benefactors, both formally and informally. One of the best ideas in this respect has been to create a close-knit 'friends club', whose members are united in a shared passion for art and culture and in which they themselves can also network. There's often a hope when a fund-raising campaign is launched that the KBF will come up with a list of potential patrons. But that's not how it works. Benefactors are drawn mainly from the circle of the people backing the project, and this group gradually expands through their respective networks. The KBF plays a crucial role in this regard as a facilitator, while simultaneously offering the necessary logistical support. It works with the founder to identify the most effective way of achieving the objectives they have formulated: a fund with or without capital? A group of friends willing to support a project, organization or institute? An institution that wants to use its own patrons to raise the necessary resources to bring a project to a successful conclusion? The KBF develops a tailored solution for every project, whereby each partner can count on a wide-ranging network and on the creativity of its own people.

In which social fields is the KBF active?

The Foundation is active in a variety of often very different fields. It currently manages in the region of five hundred patronage funds. In addition to projects in the heritage sector, such as the Rubenianum Fund, the Foundation uses these individual funds to support areas such as medical research, poverty relief projects, social justice and diversity, high-quality education, sustainable development, European integration and entrepreneurship in Africa.

The Foundation is intensively involved in the heritage sector too.

Yes, we're active in that sector in areas like movable, architectural and natural heritage, history and archaeology, music and the performing arts. The Foundation's Heritage Fund purchases Belgian masterpieces and makes them accessible to the general public. Each patronage fund has its own specific objectives: the KBF ensures that its founder's wishes are respected to the maximum degree, while also encouraging collaboration between funds to amplify their individual impact. To give an example, the KBF encouraged the Léon Courtin-Marcelle Bouché Fund to support the Rubenianum Fund, which it has been doing for some time now to the tune of a tenth of its budget.

The Foundation has developed impressively under your leadership. From your perspective,



© Frank Toussaint

what have been the highlights?

One recent highlight in my career was securing Anthony van Dyck's *Apostle Matthew* and the *Self-Portrait* by Jacob Jordaens for the Rubenshuis. About ten years ago, a lady from Brussels called Suzanne Generet contacted the Foundation to help arrange her bequest. She wanted to set up a fund at the KBF with two objectives, the first of which was to establish an annual prize for medical research into rare diseases. The award currently amounts to one million euros and is the most important of its kind offered in Belgium. Mrs Generet was also very concerned about the conservation of our architectural heritage. The best way to preserve valuable buildings is to provide them with a sustainable use and so the Generet Fund combines renovation with the creation of group housing for elderly people dependent on care. She planned to sell all her assets to finance her fund. As I sat in her drawing room, however, my eye was caught by two seventeenth-century paintings that looked pretty good: an apostle by Van Dyck and a Jordaens self-portrait. I vividly recall the conversation that followed: 'With respect, *Madame*, I wouldn't sell these two works, as they are both important pieces.' To which she replied firmly: 'Mr Allard, I will do as I please and you will carry out my wishes to the letter. But you may keep these two paintings, provided you entrust them to a prominent museum.' I don't need to spell out her answer when I asked whether the Rubenshuis qualified as a prominent museum ...

Each individual contact with a collector is actually a highlight for me: it's a privilege to be able to guide people through a personal process that will ultimately lead to them relinquishing a treasured collection. I find it at once emotional and moving, but also incredibly rewarding. Coming up with the right formula to safeguard their love of art or history – a love that has frequently developed into a lifelong passion – for later generations is very gratifying. I'm struck by the way they all pose the same questions and cherish the same expectations, yet invariably want to address them in a different way. My job is primarily to create confidence in the future and in the people who will nurture the project. Are the museums sufficiently grateful? They ought to be! Because the gratitude they show is the best way to win the trust of new donors.

The Connoisseurs' Tribune

Isabella d'Este in Black A unique drawing from the studio of Rubens discovered in Lier

Bert Schepers and Sarah Van Ooteghem*

A team of researchers from the Royal Library of Belgium and the Rubenianum recently discovered an exceptional seventeenth-century portrait drawing of Isabella d'Este (1474–1539) (fig. 1) in the collection of the Stadsmuseum Lier, which officially opened on 29 September. The drawing (fig. 2) is rare evidence of a painting by Rubens (1577–1640), now lost, of the Italian marchesa, which he kept in his possession until his death.¹ The sheet was produced in his studio around 1618/19 in preparation for a reversed print (fig. 3) engraved by Lucas Vorsterman (1595/96–1674/75), who was also probably responsible for the drawing.

The lost Rubens painting (oil on canvas, approx. 100 × 80 cm) from which the drawing derives was a copy after the famous portrait by Titian (1485/90–1576) of Isabella d'Este, wife of Francesco II Gonzaga, the Marquess of Mantua (fig. 5). It may be viewed as an artistic tribute by Rubens to the Venetian Renaissance master who was a crucial influence on his development. Rubens is likely to have seen Titian's portrait of Isabella d'Este around 1605 in Mantua, where he was working at the court of the Gonzaga family. Some time later, Titian's painting entered the art collection of Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614–1662), governor of the Southern Netherlands, which was kept in the archducal palace on the Coudenberg in Brussels. The portrait does not feature, sadly, in the various evocations of Leopold Wilhelm's personal gallery produced by his court painter David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690). An etching after Titian's painting can, however, be found in the *Theatrum Pictorium* album, the illustrated catalogue of the archduke's collection published by Teniers in Brussels in 1660. According to the caption, the etching was made by Frans van der Steen after a drawn design by Nikolaas van Hoy, which probably derived in turn from a lost *pasticcio* – a small painted copy – made by Teniers in preparation for the album. No painted copies have yet been identified of Rubens's lost *Portrait of Isabella d'Este 'dressed in black'* ('habillée de noir').² Until now, therefore, Vorsterman's print was all we had, making the newly discovered preparatory design for the engraving an important intermediate link.³

The drawing was done in pen and brush with brown ink, brown and grey wash over black chalk. White chalk (?) has been applied here and there, while some retouching in black chalk can also be observed. There are traces of indentation with a stylus for transfer to the plate and the dimensions are practically identical to those of the print, indicating that the drawing served as the definitive design for Vorsterman's engraving. Born in Zaltbommel (Holland), Lucas Vorsterman was the first engraver Rubens employed at his studio on the Wapper when he received

the necessary 'privileges' – an early form of time-limited copyright protection – to distribute his paintings internationally in print from 1619 onwards. Rubens carefully oversaw the production of prints after his work, making any adjustments he deemed necessary. A proof impression – retouched by Rubens, albeit only minimally – of the engraved portrait of Isabella d'Este can be found in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, for instance.⁴

During his time as a young engraver at Rubens's studio, Vorsterman often used preparatory designs supplied by others, including the young Anthony van Dyck.⁵ Drawings that can be securely attributed to the engraver are few and far between and done in different techniques, but a number of sheets signed by Vorsterman, and in some cases dated, survive in institutions such as the British Museum in London. These can mostly be linked to print commissions and offer a point of departure for the further study of his drawn oeuvre, which has received insufficient attention to date. Several monogrammed sheets, for instance, done solely in pen and highly linear in conception, are very close to his engravings from a technical point of view,⁶ but there are also drawings in a mixed technique that are clearly the work of a skilful draughtsman.⁷

In terms of its execution and composition, the drawn portrait of Isabella d'Este can best be compared to a very similar design (fig. 4) for an engraved portrait of Emperor Charles V (1500–1558), also based on a painting by Rubens (oil on canvas, 118 × 91.5 cm, The Viscount Mountgarret, Harrogate, Yorkshire) after a lost masterpiece by Titian.⁸ The sheet has virtually identical dimensions and was also reproduced in print by Vorsterman. Both engravings are considered to be pendants and their preparatory drawings share the same provenance. Together with numerous other *modelli* for Rubens prints, they belonged at a very early stage to the collection of the Cologne banker Everhard Jabach (1618–1695), one of the leading connoisseurs of his time. Jabach sold the lion's share of his art collection to the 'Sun King', Louis XIV, but seems to have kept for himself several of the finest



Fig. 1 Bert Schepers and Sarah Van Ooteghem, who discovered the drawing, at the press presentation in the Stadsmuseum Lier, 4 September 2018 (photograph © Stad Lier).

drawings, including the portraits of Isabella d'Este and Emperor Charles V. His paraph appears prominently on the verso of the Lier drawing (fig. 6). The sheet also features the wide gilded border found on drawings from Jabach's collection. Its subsequent provenance is currently being researched. The sheet might possibly have remained with the design for the Charles V portrait in the collection of Jabach's descendant Gerard Michael (died 1751) in Livorno (Leghorn), Italy. Further study is also needed to determine how and when the drawing found its way to Lier. The previous owner, the Lier potter and art lover Jos Verhoeven (1921–1979), bequeathed his collection of over a hundred drawings and paintings to his home town, where it has been housed since 1981 at the Stedelijk Museum Wuyts-Van Campen en Baron Caroly – recently renamed Stadsmuseum Lier (Lier City Museum). The drawing has evidently remained below the radar of Rubens scholars for all these years.

The design for the print was only discovered recently during a visit to the Lier museum as part of a joint research project between the Royal Library of Belgium and the Rubenianum to draw up a preliminary list of seventeenth-century master drawings for potential inclusion in the 'Flemish Masterpieces List' (see TRQ 2018/1). It was most surprising that this visit turned up an unknown drawing from the studio of Rubens. The find comes as a felicitous addition for the compilers of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* and of the *New Hollstein Rubens* (prepared by Jaco Rutgers and Simon Turner, see TRQ 2015/3). The newly discovered print design will also be included in Hans Jakob Meier's book, *Die Kunst der Interpretation, Rubens und seine Stecherschule (1580 bis 1650)*, due to be published next year. 'It's also very nice, obviously, that the find should have been made now, during the Baroque Year,' says a delighted Caroline Bastiaens, Antwerp's Alderman for Culture.



Fig. 2 Studio of Rubens, attributed to Lucas Vorsterman, *Portrait of Isabella d'Este in black*. Drawing, 412/14 × 317/21 mm. Stadsmuseum Lier, inv. A241 (photograph © Stad Lier).



Fig. 5 Titian, *Portrait of Isabella d'Este in black*. Oil on canvas, 102 × 64 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie, inv. G683 (photograph © KHM).



Fig. 3 Lucas Vorsterman after Rubens, *Portrait of Isabella d'Este in black*. Engraving, 420 × 318 mm. Royal Library of Belgium, Print Room, Brussels, inv. s.I 29118 (photograph © BRB/KBB).



Fig. 4 Studio of Rubens, attributed to Lucas Vorsterman, *Portrait of Emperor Charles V*. Drawing, 413 × 320 mm. Whereabouts unknown (photograph © Rubenianum).



Fig. 6 Verso of fig. 2, detail: paraph of Everhard Jabach (photograph © Stad Lier).

* The authors are grateful to Elise Boutsen, Julie Rooryck, Jaco Rutgers, Griet Van Opstal and Jeremy Wood for their kind help and suggestions.

- 1 Jeremy Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. Italian Artists, Volume II: Titian and North Italian Art (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, Part xxvii.2)*, London/Turnhout 2010, no. 135.
- 2 The portrait is described in the following terms in the inventory of Rubens's collection of paintings, drawn up after his death in 1640 (BnF, Paris, Département des Manuscrits, Fond Français 18967, fol. 200–05): '[C]y suivent les pourtraicts faicts aussy du dict Monsieur Rubens apres Titian] Num. 57. Un aultre pourtrait de la mesme [Isabel d'Este Duchesse de Mantoue] habillée de noir'.

- 3 A copy by Rubens, which can be dated somewhat earlier, after a lost original by Titian, *Isabella d'Este 'dressed in red'*, has fortunately survived (oil on canvas, 101.8 × 81 cm, c. 1600–01, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. GG 1534). See Wood 2010, no. 134, fig. 111, and S. van Dijk, 'Rubens and "the source and origin of all the pretty fashions in Italy": The portrait of Isabella d'Este in Red', in *Undressing Rubens. Fashion and Painting in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp*, conference proceedings, Rubenianum, Antwerp, 8–9 May 2014, edited by Lieneke Nijkamp and Abigail D. Newman, London/Turnhout (forthcoming).
- 4 BnF, Département des Estampes et de la photographie, réserve cc-34 (J2) boîte fol.
- 5 See, for example, Carl Depauw, "'Een leerling die zijn inventies in tekeningen kon vertalen om ze in het koper te laten snijden": Antoon van Dyck en de prentkunst

- in het Rubensatelier', in: Carl Depauw and Ger Lijten, *Antoon van Dyck en de prentkunst*, exh. cat. Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp/Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam 1999–2000, pp. 43–55.
- 6 See, for example, *Herm of 'Plato'* (Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, inv. 5949). Marjon van der Meulen, *Copies after the Antique (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, Part xxviii.2)*, London/Turnhout 1994, no. 115a, copy 2, fig. 214.
 - 7 See, for example, *The Triumph of Poverty* (The British Museum, London, inv. 1894,0721.2) and *The Triumph of Riches* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. WA1970.93).
 - 8 Wood 2010, no. 130, fig. 96. The sheet was last seen on the German art market: Kunstantiquariat C.G. Boerner GmbH, *Neue Lagerliste 72: Zeichnungen vor 1900*, Düsseldorf 1980, no. 5.

Conference, 5–6 November

Many Antwerp Hands: Collaborations in Netherlandish Art, 1400–1750

This conference will address several issues relating to collaborative practices through lectures and sessions devoted to contemporary reception, workshop processes and comparative cases in other parts of Europe. Anne Woollett and Filip Vermeylen will present the keynote speeches, exploring how we define artistic collaboration and the important role of Antwerp as artistic centre for collaborative practices, respectively.

It is our pleasure to invite you to this two-day conference. The full programme and registration details are available on the Rubenianum's website.

The Rubenshuis acquires an early masterpiece by Van Dyck

By the age of 22, when he left his home town of Antwerp for an extended stay in Italy, Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641) had produced a larger and more accomplished body of work than many artists produce in a whole lifetime. Among the most important works from this so-called first Antwerp period are a large number of highly expressive pieces with bust-length male figures, whose attributes identify them as apostles. The young Van Dyck painted at least three series of apostles, all of them dispersed. Thanks to the generosity of the King Baudouin Foundation, such a Van Dyck apostle can now be admired for the first time

in a Belgian public collection. Over the past year and a half, the picture has been painstakingly restored at the KIK/IRPA in Brussels by Aline Genbrugge, using the most advanced techniques in the field of panel restoration. The next issue of the *Rubenianum Quarterly* will feature an extensive article on the painting and its restoration. *Ben van Beneden*

Rubens's *Massacre of the Innocents* on loan to the Rubenshuis

From October 2018 to March 2019, the Rubenshuis will host *The Massacre of the Innocents*, a masterpiece of outstanding quality and one of Rubens's most powerful and revealing works. The artist painted the *Massacre* in about 1611, shortly after his return to Antwerp after eight extremely fertile years in Italy. Writing in the exhibition catalogue *Rubens: A Master in the Making* (London 2005), David Jaffé aptly described the *Massacre* as 'the summation of all Rubens learned on his travels in Italy'. For the past 250 years the *Massacre* had wrongly been catalogued as the work of Jan van den Hoecke, an artist who worked in Rubens's studio. In 2001 it was rediscovered by Sotheby's Old Masters specialist, George Gordon. When it was purchased in 2002 by the late Ken Thomson (1923–2006), the *Massacre* was the most expensive Old Master painting ever sold at auction. Ken Thomson subsequently donated the painting, along with some two thousand other works of art, to the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. It is the first time that the *Massacre* has left the Canadian museum. *Ben van Beneden*

The Rubenianum Lectures

Sunday, 16 December 2018, 11 am

DR BERT SCHEPERS

Centrum Rubenianum

Copy/Paste Rubens

The Rediscovery of Victor Wolfvoet

The long-forgotten painted oeuvre of Victor Wolfvoet (1612–1652) has recently been rediscovered and re-examined. This small Antwerp master can be considered one of Rubens's most faithful followers. With eagerness and precision he copied his paintings and oil sketches and it is assumed that he had access to Rubens's workshop. Attention is also given to Wolfvoet's decoration of the Antwerp cabinet in the Rubenshuis.

The lecture is in Dutch.

12 December, 2–5 pm

Art Evaluation Day 2018

The annual Rubenianum Art Evaluation Day is coming up! Inform neighbours, friends, family and relatives of this unique opportunity to have private artworks scrutinized by a team of experts. We invite people with Old Master paintings, drawings, prints and small sculptures. The event is free of charge and no registration is required. Please note that the opinions provided by the experts cannot be regarded as a formal evaluation to be used for any commercial purpose.



Anthony van Dyck, *The Apostle Matthew*, c. 1618–20. Oil on panel, 62.5 x 50 cm. Rubenshuis, Antwerp (on permanent loan from the King Baudouin Foundation – Bequest Generet Fund). © KIK/IRPA

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, c. 1611. Oil on panel, 142 x 182 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. The Thomson Collection. © Art Gallery of Ontario



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