

The Rubenianum Quarterly

2018
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Dinner in the Golden Room at the Mauritshuis, The Hague

Rubenianum Fund Field Trip to Holland

For the 2018 Rubenianum Fund Field Trip, participants gathered on 18 October in The Hague for a welcome dinner in the stately Golden Room of the Mauritshuis, amidst many of the nation's most treasured paintings. Friday morning we reconvened on the opposite side of The Hague's Hofvijver to visit Huis Schuylenburch, the preciously restored German ambassador's residence designed by Daniel Marot, followed by a visit to the adjacent Bredius Museum and the Hoogsteder gallery, greeted by benefactor Willem Jan and his wife Karin. Lunch awaited us at the impressive Duivenvoorde Castle with its Marot-designed grand dining room. In Rotterdam the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum kindly hosted the launch of the latest *Corpus Rubenianum* publication, with Thomas Leysen presenting its author Nils Büttner who passionately introduced us to his two-volume *Allegories and Subjects from Literature*. Another fervent Rubens scholar, Friso Lammertse, gave an account of his work on the current 'Pure Rubens' oil sketches show at his museum in collaboration with the Prado. Afterwards he and Arnout Balis, Ben van Beneden and Koenraad Jonckheere guided us through this highly commendable exhibition. Upon our return to The Hague, Baron and Baroness Bentinck van Schoonheten presided over the dinner at the exclusive Haagsche Club. Saturday morning was dedicated to the Flemish sculptor Artus Quellinus and his stunning work preserved at the Amsterdam City Hall, now Royal Palace, and at the Rijksmuseum. Subsequently a delicious lunch was offered by benefactor Bob Haboltdt and his wife Spinella at the Michelin-starred RIJKS restaurant and we began the afternoon with an inspiring visit to passionate Old Master drawings collector Paul Russell and the next-door collection of paintings of his late father. The day was concluded in Haarlem with a visit to the 'Frans Hals and the Moderns' exhibition and dinner in the Museum's Schutterszaal, hosted by Director Ann Demeester. On Sunday morning, one hour ahead of the crowds, Director Marjan Scharloo of the Teylers Museum welcomed us at the insightful exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci drawings, a visit followed by a delightful guided walk in historic Haarlem. This year's field trip concluded with lunch served in the Director's Hall at Huis Hodshon, which accommodates the country's oldest society for the sciences. With all 55 participants seated at one long dining table, we paid tribute to Thomas Leysen, Martine Menten and Lieve Vandeputte for their endeavours in bringing Rubens aficionados from around the world together in sharing their common passion through such an enchanting programme.

Michel Ceuterick

A New Year ... of Rubenianum Lectures

As we enter a New Year of Flemish art history activities and *Corpus* volumes, let us briefly dwell upon our tradition of Sunday morning Rubenianum Lectures. Launched in 2010 under the auspices of Thomas Leysen, Chairman of the Rubenianum Fund, and with the support of the Baillet Latour Fund, this series of lectures intends to bring together the community of Rubens aficionados and supporters around the *Corpus Rubenianum* Ludwig Burchard. The idea is that scholars share new research findings first-hand with the audience, and the past thirty-four lectures have indeed demonstrated an abundance of topics and talented speakers. The series' format is open to any topic relating to Flemish art and culture from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including its reception in later ages. That this is acclaimed by the public was proven by the steady increase of attendance figures over the years. On average, we welcome around a hundred people, including many Antwerp city guides, but also art-lovers and colleagues from Antwerp and (far) beyond. (This success is echoed by equally popular Sunday morning lectures in Antwerp institutions such as the Snijders&Rockoxhuis, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts and the Heritage Library.) Now that the Rubenianum Lectures have conquered their place in Antwerp's cultural agenda, we have invited for our tenth year, four erudite and eloquent speakers. Arnout Balis, Manfred Sellink, Tine Luk Meganck and Daan Van Heesch will bring to the fore compelling arguments about Peter Paul Rubens and Pieter Bruegel the Elder – who is celebrated in 2019. So, make sure to register in time for another season of fascinating stories on early modern Flemish art!

On behalf of the Rubenianum, the Centrum Rubenianum and the Rubens House, I offer our very best wishes for a marvellous new year.

Véronique Van de Kerckhof
Director of the Rubenianum

In memoriam Carl Van de Velde 1936–2018



Carl Van de Velde, who died in Antwerp on 15 November 2018, was a true pillar of our institution, the Centrum Rubenianum. He was with it from the first years. Carl was offered the position of scientific collaborator on 1 October 1960, and remained a devoted member of the Centrum thereafter, acting as its chairman from 2001 to 2004.

Carl had studied law as well as art history at the University of Ghent (1956–60), and a forensic approach to procedure and to the assessment of the evidence of texts would always be part and parcel of his approach to art history – and perhaps also to human society in general. In 1970 he obtained his doctoral degree with a study of Frans Floris. Published in 1975, this work remains fundamental to the understanding of this important sixteenth-century painter. Its appendix of some two hundred documents, the result of a decade of very intensive archival research, testifies to another of Carl's scholarly characteristics: always to go back to the documentary sources available, subjecting them to critical analysis and judicious interpretation. And Carl, it must be said, had a certain aversion to speculative and meta-theoretical construction.

One of the first tasks assigned to Carl when he entered the Centrum was to produce the inventory of an important acquisition just made by the city of Antwerp: the vast documentation of the great Rubens scholar, Ludwig Burchard, who had died in London in September 1960. On the basis of this material, the Centrum could embark on the multi-volume *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*.

But it had first to be sorted, structured and then continuously brought up to date. In the establishment and pursuit of this ambitious publication programme, Carl Van de Velde played a crucial role. Right up to the end of his life, he spared no effort to maintain the high standards established from the outset.

When extra research was needed, especially in the archives, Carl was enlisted to help. In the case of the *Corpus* volume devoted to the book illustrations Rubens designed for the Plantin-Moretus press, his contribution was so extensive that he was acknowledged as co-author (J. Richard Judson and Carl Van de Velde, *Book Illustrations and Title-Pages*, xxi, 1978). This publication is also a testimony to Carl's abiding interest in the many and varied relationships between visual arts and books, to which I shall return. He had hoped himself to write the volume on *Allegories and Subjects from Literature* (xii), for which over decades he had been assembling material, but eventually, under pressure from other commitments, he passed this over to Nils Büttner – whose study has just appeared (see elsewhere in this *Quarterly*). But he was able to make a crucial contribution to another recent volume in our series, that on Rubens's *Mythological Subjects* (2016), with the catalogue entries on scenes illustrating Virgil's great poem, *The Aeneid*.

Carl's other commitments were indeed many and various. Recognizing his outstanding scholarly contribution during his long period as a researcher at the Centrum (during which time others were able to come on board as colleagues: Hans Vlieghe from 1968, and Paul Huvenne from 1973 onwards), the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (vub) offered him a full professorship in 1986, and as Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (1996–2000) he steered the Art History and Archaeology Department safely through the reform of its academic curriculum. On his retirement from the university he was presented with a *Liber Amicorum*, with articles by former students and colleagues worldwide (*Florissant, Bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis der Nederlanden (15de–17de eeuw), Liber Amicorum Carl Van de Velde*, 2005), which includes his full bibliography up to that date. Among the many honorific titles he received, his membership of the Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten (Klasse van de Kunsten) perhaps meant most to him.

Carl was much engaged in the Interuniversity Institute of Renaissance and Humanism (vub-ULB); as its director, he published the acts of an international colloquium he organized around a theme close to his heart, not only for what it meant

to Floris and to Rubens, but maybe also for its significance to his own personal ideology: *Classical Mythology in the Netherlands in the Age of Renaissance and Baroque* (2009). In this publication the contributors (including younger collaborators of the Centrum Rubenianum) explored the relationships between literature, humanist learning and the arts, and between the intellectual culture of Antiquity and that of the early modern period.

I have already touched on the importance of primary sources for Carl. The search for and analysis of archival records was for him not only one of the foundations, but one of the great delights of history, including art history. Re-reading some of his momentous articles in this field (that on Rubens's *Madonna with Saints* for the St Augustine Church, 1977, for example, or on the High Altar of Antwerp Cathedral, 1975) is like assisting at an object lesson in how to set about such research. And recently, when a new debate sprung up over the exact date and place of birth of his hero, Rubens, Carl at once set to work vigorously. Ploughing again over the whole field, he succeeded in unearthing new documents which he found deserved 'the attention of historians of law and philologists' (Carl Van de Velde and Prisca Valkeneers, *The Birth of Rubens*, 2013; and rest assured, the time and place remain as 1577 and Siegen). Carl also contributed a splendid account of Rubens's letters written in Dutch to the *Festschrift* for his friend Hans Vlieghe (2006), and another publication related to that subject appeared in this very *Quarterly* (2011.4).

The very last article Carl saw through the press again brings into focus some of his core interests: documents and the illustrated book. But it is not on Rubens (rather, a close follower), not on secular iconography (rather, the opposite: Catholic propaganda), not on Antiquity (but on far-flung regions): 'Van Diepenbeecks Illustraties voor *De Kerckelycke Historie Van de Geheele Werelt*' (*Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis*, LXXXVI.1, 2017). It illustrates Carl's consummate qualities as an art historian, with new archival material throwing light on the drawings of an interesting artist. The drawings are analysed from the technical, stylistic and iconographic point of view, the visual and literary sources are exploited, and the social context (a law suit) is highlighted. It is this kind of art history that I believe also typifies the Centrum's approach to Rubens's production in the *Corpus Rubenianum*, and for us Carl's work will remain an inspiring example.

Arnout Balis
Chairman, Centrum Rubenianum

Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part XII

Allegories and Subjects from Literature by Nils Büttner

The latest, two-volume Corpus part was presented on 18 October in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Rubens was particularly drawn to allegory, the use of personifications, sometimes in combination with the gods of the ancient Pantheon and historical figures, to express concepts, ideals and even political messages. The new publication features some of the artist's most celebrated paintings, as well as some lesser-known or recently discovered items. We give the floor to Nils Büttner who enlightens us on the book's coming about.

In 2014 the editorial board of the *Corpus Rubenianum* entrusted me with the allegory volume, an honourable task which proved to involve a lot of work. At the time I still had no idea what it meant to write this book with its 68 catalogue entries. That sounds like a big, yet finite task were it not for the *Corpus Rubenianum*'s ambitious goal of discussing not only the original works, but also all known copies. Copies are known of each of the 68 works. Sometimes there is just one, sometimes only two or three, but often there are thirty, forty or even fifty copies. Of the more than seven hundred works altogether mentioned in this book I have gathered as much information as possible. Although it is incredibly time-consuming to determine the provenances of these copies and repetitions and to compile a bibliography that is as complete as possible, it is worth the effort because it also informs us about the changing perceptions of Rubens's images. Moreover, some of the copies are also of high quality and unquestionably made in Rubens's studio.

Not only did I try to see all the originals, but also the copies whose photographs suggested they were worth the trip. I have experienced a great deal of support in museums from New York to Tokyo and got to know interesting people in the houses of private collectors. But that I knew about them was not my merit, especially at the beginning of my research. I'm just the proverbial dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant. The present publication features the paintings Ludwig Burchard gathered on this subject while working on his planned catalogue raisonné of Rubens's oeuvre. For every picture he meant to include in his catalogue, he created a folder. Carl Van de Velde, in particular, has made a major contribution in this area. The staff of the Centrum Rubenianum have vastly expanded it. The resulting material is overwhelming. It includes not only the files but also Burchard's handwritten notes in two copies of Max Rooses's five-volume catalogue of Rubens works. He did the same with the 'Klassiker der Kunst' volumes on Rubens, of which he filled at least four copies with partly overlapping remarks. The longer I worked on my book, the greater my respect for Burchard's work became. The Burchard files and the Rubenianum documentation offer plenty of

information, but it is not available in a form that can be directly copied and printed. Rather, every note in the folders was an invitation to further research. It was extremely useful to take every one of them into account, but it was still a long way to a catalogue entry.

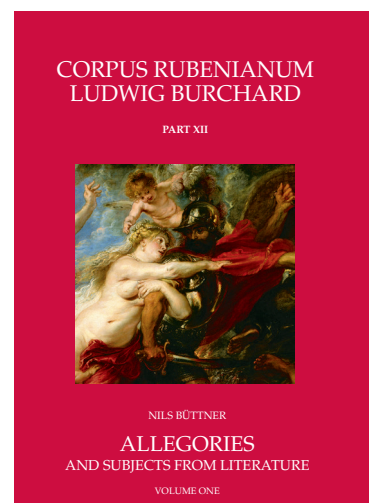
The individual catalogue numbers are organized following the structure that has been common in the *Corpus* project for several years, the starting point invariably being the original painting. I tried to see all the original paintings, drawings and prints and discussed them with the people in the collections and museums. The text of each entry starts with the provenance and actual appearance of the painting. In the tradition of Ludwig Burchard, I attempted to trace the history of the motifs and, for example, to refer to related motifs in other works by Rubens. At the same time, the entries aim to illustrate the connection between the picture under discussion and works by other artists. These relationships are demonstrated in the text but also by means of visual argumentation. The fact that text and illustrations are in separate volumes is very helpful in this respect.

The interconnection of a given work with other dated works makes it possible to incorporate it into the artist's oeuvre. I always

endeavoured not only to ascertain the dates I proposed, but also to substantiate them. And I tried to find all the text sources that would have been available to Rubens and his contemporaries in the context of his images.

The book took two years of research and writing and almost another two years of hard work for my translators and editors. I do not write or even speak English. I think in German and I write in German, which has sometimes presented my translators with great challenges. To give just one example: in relation to the Munich picture with the allegory of fertility I received a request from my translator Michael Foster. He had problems with the translation of my description of the background. His question, number 7 on a list with more than thirty other queries, was: 'What is „algig Grün“ – "algae green" – I'm not familiar with the expression.' Instead of giving an answer, I sent him a picture. So the unusual expression found its way into the book. Not all questions could be answered that easily though, and my translators did a lot to make the book readable and perhaps more intelligible. The editorial work for this book was a Herculean task.

I am greatly indebted to a large number of institutions and individuals who have helped me in a variety of ways. I was kindly received and given assistance in many public and private collections, but my principal gratitude goes to the Rubenianum, whose staff has given me every help and support. The work continues. But perhaps work is the wrong word, for as Liz McGrath rightly says: 'Rubens is not work, Rubens is just fun.'



Rubens, *The Shivering Venus (Venus Frigida)*. Detail. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. The detail shows the original composition (121 × 95 cm) without the later extensions.

The Rubenianum Fund on the move again Field Trip to Holland, October 2018



Huis Schuylenburch, residence of the German ambassador, The Hague.



Alice Taatgen, curator of the Koninklijk Paleis Amsterdam, explaining the iconographic programme of Amsterdam's former City Hall.



Thomas Leysen introducing the latest addition to the *Corpus Rubenianum*, authored by Nils Büttner, at the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam.



Lunch in Duivenvoorde Castle's dining room designed by Daniel Marot.



Lunch at Huis Hodshon, Haarlem, home to the country's oldest society for the sciences, with Rijnhard van Tets explaining the workings of the Koninklijke Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen of which he is a member.



Friso Lammertse, curator of the 'Pure Rubens' exhibition at the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, expounding his views.



Visiting the Hoogsteder gallery, The Hague.



Paul Russell explaining his passion for Old Master drawings.



Deal done! Leon Seynaeve having a great time in front of Huis Schuylenburch.

Cataloguing the Rubenianum's sale catalogues

In 2015 the Rubenianum launched a project to register its last uncatalogued library collection: an ensemble of around thirty thousand sale catalogues from auction houses around the world, dating from the late 1700s to the present. After four years, this project has resulted in 26,000 titles added to the online collection catalogue, all browsable through the customary bibliographic search options (title, author, edition etc.) as well as the specific auction data (place, house and date). In the next twelve months we hope to reach the goal of fully completing the registration.

The impact of this undertaking should not be underestimated. Auction catalogues are crucial for provenance research and especially valuable for assembling information about works in private collections. Since our library information is made available worldwide through Worldcat.org, this project has already resulted in several requests from an international audience to gain access to auction catalogues that until now are to be found in our holdings only. Seeing other art libraries struggle to register their collections of sale catalogues, in 2018 the Rubenianum also made available the metadata itself for reuse by other libraries through an Open Data Platform, a service already used by Ghent University among other institutions.

Because of the importance of information on auctioned works of art, the Rubenianum has enriched its core collection of auction catalogues on paper with two databases: the Art Sales Catalogues Online (ASCO) is based on the *Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques* assembled by Frits Lugt, and gives access to the digital copies of auction catalogues published before 1900. The ArtPrice database holds information on more recently auctioned works.

If you are interested in conducting research with the help of these resources, please do not hesitate to contact the Rubenianum library staff to assist you with your reference needs. | *Ute Staes*

Save the date!

Study day: The Van Herck Family Rubenianum, 5 April 2019

Few people know that the archives of Charles Van Herck and Adolf Jansen, both eminent researchers on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Flemish sculpture, were secured at the Rubenianum by Frans Baudouin in the 1990s. Over the last two years these two archival collections have finally been inventoried in detail. Since 2019 also marks the 135th birth anniversary of Charles Van Herck, the Rubenianum organizes a study day to highlight this notable Antwerp art historian and art dealer.

The programme includes speakers from institutions holding archives related to the

The Rubenianum Lectures

Sunday, 24 March 2019, 11 am

PROF. EM. ARNOU BALIS
Centrum Rubenianum

Missing Stages in Rubens's Design Process

A substantial part of Rubens's vast creative output are his sketches on paper, in oil, and bozzetti in many forms shaping his artistic ideas. Although large numbers of these preparative works have been preserved – and indeed are among the Rubenses that fascinate present-day audiences most – many must have been lost. In his lecture Arnout Balis will for the first time shed light on what is missing.

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

Van Herck business and family members. The aim of the study day is to reconstruct the legacy of this renowned family as well as shed light on the phenomenon of art dealers' records and how to make them accessible from an archivist's perspective.

If you happen to have information on still-existing interior decorations by Van Herck or archival documents and photographs in private collections, please contact Elise Gacoms at elise.gacoms@antwerpen.be.



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