Announcing project Collection Ludwig Burchard II

We are pleased to announce that through a generous donation the Rubenianum will be able to dedicate another project to Ludwig Burchard’s scholarly legacy. The project entails two main components, both building on previous undertakings that have been carried out to preserve the Rubenianum’s core collection and at the same time ensure enhanced accessibility to the scholarly community of the wealth of Rubens documentation. Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, launched in 2013 and successfully extended until May 2016, will be continued for all Corpus volumes published before 2003, abiding by the moving wall of 15 years, that was agreed upon with Brepols Publishers, for the years 2016–18.

The second and larger component of the project builds on the enterprise titled A treasure trove of study material. Disclosure and valorization of the Collection Ludwig Burchard, successfully executed in 2014–15. An archival description of Rubenianum objects originating from Burchard’s library and documentation has since allowed for a virtual reconstruction of the expert’s scholarly legacy. Much emphasis was placed on the Rubens files during this project, while the collection contains many other resources that are of considerable importance to Rubens research. For instance, Burchard frequently scribbled his thoughts on attribution in the margins of his own catalogues while scrutinizing a painting on site. His notebooks and appointment diaries reveal carefully planned travel details. Burchard’s correspondence attests to his international network of scholars and art dealers. Each and every one of these objects makes for a unique resource on Rubens research, but has only been roughly inventoried so far. This present project includes a more detailed description of these archival documents, which will allow the research community, and Corpus authors specifically, to delve further into the archive and benefit from Burchard’s accurate observations. Another part of the project involves the conservation and description of engraved reproductions and original drawings, some dating back to the 17th century, that form an interesting part of Burchard’s Rubens files.

This announcement does not allow me to describe all the separate parts of the project, dubbed Project Collection Ludwig Burchard II, but interim results will be published regularly through the Rubenianum’s newsletter and website. Close collaboration with the RKD and Illuminare will ensure a fruitful exchange of expertise. The project’s final results should be presented at a conference devoted to archival best practices that the Rubenianum is planning for 2018.

I have the pleasure to inform you of the imminent publication of the first part of the mythology volumes in the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard. The two volumes are going to press as we speak and will be truly impressive. Consisting of nearly 1000 pages and over 400 images, they will be a monumental addition to our ever-growing catalogue raisonné of Rubens’s oeuvre and constitute a wonderful Easter present.

In the meantime, volume XIX, 4 on Peter Paul Rubens’s many portrait copies, the volume on the famous Decius Mus series (XIII, 2) and volume XVII on his collaborations with Jan Brueghel have been translated and are in the process of being edited. The photo editing advances diligently as well. We expect all of these volumes to come out before the end of this year. In sum, we are proceeding at cruising speed now and have the ambition to keep up this pace until this gigantic project is finished in 2020.

The Corpus Rubenianum has proven to be an Odyssey – to stay on topic – but Ithaca is in sight.

Let me also take this occasion to warmly thank the two team members who have recently left us, Marieke and Prisca. They both played a crucial role in the publication of several volumes in the past years.

Koen Jonckheere
Director of Publications

The Rubenianum – as it has come to be called – can only have been in the eyes of Roger d’Hulst and Frans Baudouin when you were young; I wonder how you first became aware of the artist? Well, in my childhood home in the west of Scotland, we had a book about art: The History of British Paintings, which my father had acquired by collecting cigarette coupons. In it there was only one Rubens, the National Gallery Susanna Fourmout. I liked this lady. When I was about twelve, I saw her again on the cover of a booklet on a shelf in our local newsagent. The shopkeeper refused to let me undo the wrapper to peek inside, but I decided it was just right as a birthday present for my father. I was distinctly embarrassed when I found reproductions inside of lots of naked and near-naked women – The Three Graces, the goddesses in the Prado Judgment of Paris. Diana and Callisto and melting Fontan or a Wrap. My father seemed happy enough with the book, however. Later it migrated to my bookshelf. After all, the author was Julius Held.

But I think it was when you were at university, and you knew that you had your Rubens epiphany…

Yes, I was to see Helena in the flesh! in Vienna in the summer of 1966 on the start of a voyage of art-historical discovery that took me round Italy and ended in Munich. It was there, in Munich, that I realised, however much I admired Giottto and Raphael, Rubens was the artist for me. The little Foli of the Damned decided the matter; I loved this picture, then I must love Rubens.

You earned your living working in, and then running, the Photographic Collection of the Warburg Institute in London, where you also taught; I wonder what brought you there in the first place?

My peculiar degree in ancient Greek and the history of art qualified me for the Warburg and for little else, and besides I had visited its library, which is an integral part of the warburg Institute’s Journal and admired the director Ernst Gombrich, whose Story of Art had been a revelation to me. He took me on to write a thesis on Rubens’s decorations for the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand’s entry into Troy. Along the way I had visited some of the other great collections, which I had been accepted. Paul Hovemer was particularly generous in making me feel at home there, and Arne Balls, who agreed to be the editor of your most successful book, Rubens, was to become a close friend. The Centrum Rubenianum – as it has come to be called – can only have been in the eyes of Roger d’Hulst and Frans Baudouin when you were young; I wonder how you first became aware of the artist? Well, in my childhood home in the west of Scotland, we had a book about art: The History of British Paintings, which my father had acquired by collecting cigarette coupons. In it there was only one Rubens, the National Gallery Susanna Fourmout. I liked this lady. When I was about twelve, I saw her again on the cover of a booklet on a shelf in our local newsagent. The shopkeeper refused to let me undo the wrapper to peek inside, but I decided it was just right as a birthday present for my father. I was distinctly embarrassed when I found reproductions inside of lots of naked and near-naked women – The Three Graces, the goddesses in the Prado Judgment of Paris. Diana and Callisto and melting Fontan or a Wrap. My father seemed happy enough with the book, however. Later it migrated to my bookshelf. After all, the author was Julius Held.

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Rubeniana

Rubenshuis acquires a modello by Jan Boeckhorst

The Rubenshuis recently acquired a modello for Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes (c. 1664–1668), a German-born painter who was a pupil and assistant of Rubens. The modello, which fits superbly into the collection of the Rubenshuis, was acquired with funding from the Friends of the Rubenshuis.

The discovery of Achilles, disguised as a woman, among the daughters of King Lycomedes was regularly depicted in paintings. Rubens and Van Dyck, for example, both treated this Homeric theme. According to an ancient legend, Achilles’ mother, knowing that her son would die if he fought in the Trojan War, entrusted him to Lycomedes’ household, where he lived among the king’s daughters in his palace on the island of Scyrus. When war threatened, Odysseus and other Greek chief-tains were sent to fetch Achilles, knowing they had to trick him into revealing himself. They cunningly deposited a heap of feminine gifts before the women – jewellery, clothes and other finery – as well as some weaponry. When time had come to select a gift, Achilles instinctively grabbed the weapons, thus betraying his true identity.

The sketch served as a modello for the painting of the same name (c. 1653–55) at the Staatsgalerie in Schleswig. Boeckhorst’s modello will be displayed alongside similar examples by Justus van Egmont and Jan van den Hoecke. | Ben van Beneden

Open for registration
From book to byte. Art publications in transition

On 21 April 2016 the Rubenshuis organizes a study day in conclusion of the project ‘Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard’. This day will be devoted to the transition from printed volumes to web-based art-historical publications, presenting case studies from the Low Countries, parallel to online museum catalogues that have recently been published under the umbrella of the Getty Foundation’s Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative. A variety of projects will be discussed, illustrating challenges as well as success stories and covering viewpoints from museums, libraries and publishers alike. The study day includes contributions by the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Flemish Art Collection, IBRA, KIK Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, and Brepols Publishers. Participants receive free access to the Rubenshuis museum, and can also sign up for a brief behind-the-scene tour of the Rubenshuis.

All lectures are in Dutch. Registration is mandatory and open until 1 August. For registration and programme details, please consult our website http://www.rubenshuis.be.nl/actieltijd/\ndruck-to-byte

The study day is part of the project ‘Digitizing the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard’ sponsored by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the Flemish Government.

Peter Paul Rubens, The Three Graces (detail). Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

Peter Paul Rubens, Dione and Callisto. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

Jan Boeckhorst, Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes. Oil on paper, laid down on panel, 23.5 x 34.5 cm

The Rubenianum Lectures

Sunday, 19 June 2016, 11 am

Jamie Richardson

Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania

RUBENIANUM FELLOW 2015–16

Frans Franccken the Younger and the Curious Case of the Encyclopedic Still Life

While previous studies have investigated the gallery painting genre as a progressive whole, little attention has been given to its earliest stages of development as manifested in the work of the genre’s likely inventor, Frans Franccken the Younger (1580–1642). This lecture will address its least studied category, the so-called ‘encyclopedic still life’ on Pretium, painted exclusively by Fransckes and his studio, in the context of early modern curiosity culture and its discursive practice of collection.

The lecture is in English and coincides with the start of the Summer Course for the Study of the Arts in Flanders – The Age of Rubens in Context, 19–29 June 2016.

Coming out soon

New Corpus volume

The Centrum Rubenianum is proud to announce the publication of the first of three volumes on Rubens’s mythological subjects. The book will be presented at the Rubens House in early May.
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