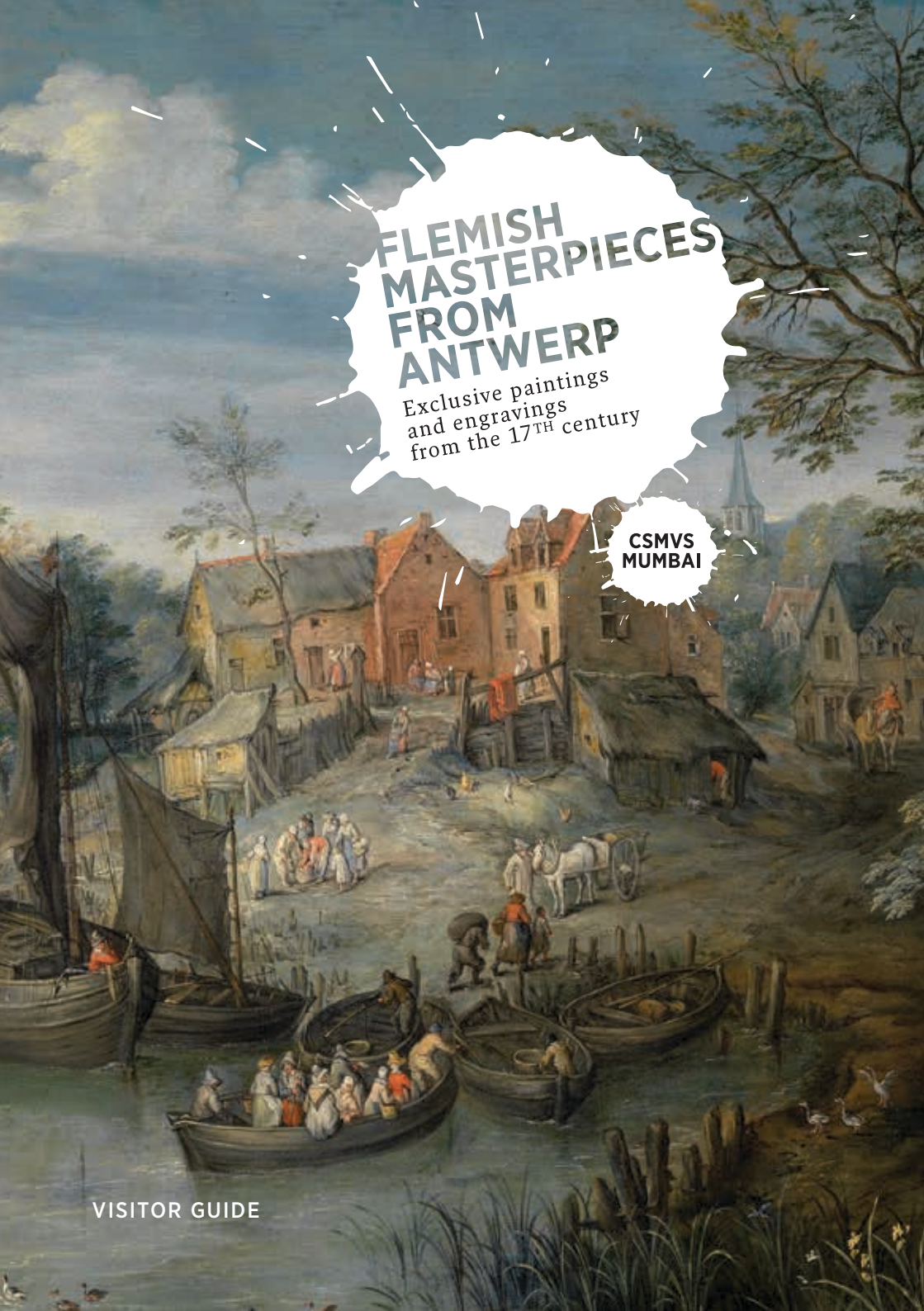


FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP

Exclusive paintings and engravings from the 17TH century

CSMVS MUMBAI

VISITOR GUIDE

FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP

Exclusive paintings
and engravings
from the 17TH century

CSMVS
MUMBAI

Front and back cover:
Jan I Brueghel, 1603, *River landscape*
© Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, Lucas-Art-Flanders

FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP
Exclusive paintings and engravings from the 17TH century

is presented by

THE PORT OF ANTWERP

THE CITY OF ANTWERP

THE ROYAL MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS ANTWERP

in collaboration with

CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ
VASTU SANGRAHALAYA

FROM 28 NOVEMBER 2013 TO 9 FEBRUARY 2014
The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya
159/161 Mahatma Ghandi Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 023

CONTENT

PREFACE
Didier Reynders
Page 11

Kris Peeters
Page 13

Mark Van Peel
Page 15

Philip Heylen
Page 17

Mr. Sabyasachi Mukherjee
Page 19

Dr. Paul Huvenne
Page 21

Iris Kockelbergh
Page 23

ESSAY: A MIXTURE OF RELIGION AND COMMERCE:
ANTWERP IN THE 17TH CENTURY
Dr. Katharina Van Cauteren
Page 25

GRAPHICS, A MEDIUM FOR MASS COMMUNICATION
Mrs. Iris Kockelbergh
Page 34

SELECTED PAINTINGS AND GRAPHICS
Dr. Katharina Van Cauteren (paintings) & Mrs. Iris Kockelbergh (prints)

HISTORY PAINTING
Page 37

PORTRAIT
Page 65

GENRE
Page 85

LANDSCAPE
Page 115

STILL LIFE
Page 141

COLOPHON
Page 152


Brussels
Antwerp
Delhi
Mumbai
1000 KM
Scale at Equator


United Kingdom
Denmark
Ireland
750 km
500 km
250 km
The Netherlands
Belgium
Germany
Luxemburg
Austria
France
Switzerland
Italy
Spain
Portugal

Proudly presented by the **Port of Antwerp**, together with

our diamond sponsors

Port of Antwerp

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Federal Public Service
Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation

CITY OF ANTWERP

With the support of the Flemish government

our gold sponsors

ESSAR PORTS

AXA ART

all cargo logistics ltd.

THE AVVASHYA GROUP

JEAN VERHEYEN
member of AXA Group

our silver sponsors

JET AIRWAYS

CEL
Tanks & Liquid Solutions

our bronze sponsors

DEME
Dredging, Environmental & Marine Engineering

Deloitte.

ING

VELJI DOSABHAI & SONS PVT. LTD.

Breakbulk

in co-operation with:

THE MUSEUM
MUMBAI

KONINKLIJK
MUSEUM
VOOR SCHONE
KUNSTEN
ANTWERPEN



Antwerp at night



Court of Justice, Antwerp

PREFACE

India with its 1.2 billion inhabitants is one of the dynamic new economic superpowers in the world, the so-called BRIC countries. In comparison, Belgium with a population of 11 million is a relatively small country, but it has one of the world's Top-20 economies and also plays an important part within the European Union with its 500 million inhabitants. Brussels is not only the capital of Belgium, but also the political and administrative heart of this united Europe.

Belgium became independent in 1830. In the course of the past 40 years the country has developed into an efficient federal structure, including an increasingly far-reaching economic role of the three regions: Flanders in the north, Wallonia in the south and Brussels in the centre. As Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade I promote Belgium's international economic and trade relations with, among others, the rapidly developing countries such as India. In the course of November 2013 I will therefore assume a leading role during a large mission of entrepreneurs and business people to some growth areas in India, chaired by HRH Princess Astrid.

It goes without saying that a working visit to Mumbai, the largest port city and one of the major economic motors of India, is also included in our travel programme. Antwerp, "the gateway to Europe", will not only focus on its maritime assets, but also set the spotlights on its rich and varied artistic heritage.

On 27 November 2013 the "**FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP**. *Exclusive Paintings and Engravings from the 17TH century*" exhibition will be officially opened in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum. Symbiosis between art and economy has long been a tradition in our regions, and goes back to the 15TH century when Flemish works of art were traded for foreign commodities such as sugar from the Portuguese Azores.
Four major Antwerp players, viz. the city council, the Port of Antwerp, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts and the Plantin-Moretus Museum, have joined forces to show the general public in Mumbai outstanding items from the 17th-century Antwerp collections. Such a laudable initiative is of course supported by the Federal Government.

We are convinced that such initiatives will undoubtedly contribute to a surprising and more profound introduction to European cultural expressions for all visitors to the exhibition.

Didier Reynders - *Belgian Vice-Premier* and *Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs*

Central Station, Antwerp



PREFACE

Five hundred years ago the Flemish Primitives amazed the World with their eye for detail and their astonishing style. It was the start of Flemish cultural heritage that continues to expand up to the present time. The work of the Flemish Primitives inspired numerous generations of artists, including our golden generation from the 17TH century. Names such as Rubens and Jordaens still have a resonant ring of excellence.

The "**FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP**. *Exclusive Paintings and Engravings from the 17TH century*" exhibition offers an overview of the work by these and other 17TH-century Flemish painters. The works brought together in this exhibition were scattered over renowned museums in Antwerp.
This should not come as a surprise, since Flemish pioneering craftsmanship always found its way to distant and less distant places. The historical intertwining of art and economics ensured that nowadays Flanders is still is one of the most open economies and communities. The City of Antwerp plays an essential role in this. From the late Middle Ages, Antwerp has been a major and highly prosperous commercial city, which has always been accompanied by an unprecedented cultural and creative boom.

"**FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP**. *Exclusive Paintings and Engravings from the 17TH century*" is a new highlight in the ever stronger cooperation between Flanders and India that exists in many fields. Obviously there are diamonds, but the cooperation between our port and dredging industry also increases year on year. Flanders will continue to invest in further reinforcement of Flemish-Indian relations. We want to eliminate trade barriers and also discover in which academic, tourist and cultural field there is room for new cooperation. For example, last year we were honoured to receive the Horasis Global India Business Meeting in Antwerp. And last month the biennial international arts festival Europalia started in our country, with India as the guest country. For a period of four months this festival puts the focus on all kinds of Indian art forms. I am convinced that with these initiatives we will arrive at further strengthening and intensification of Flemish-Indian relations. In any case, "**FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP**. *Exclusive Paintings and Engravings from the 17TH century*" is the right place to start your exploration of our region in the centre of Europe.

Kris Peeters - *Minister-President of the Government of Flanders*



PREFACE

Whoever looks on a world map, will see it straight away: ports lie at the intersections, between land and water, between old and new worlds; they are access ports to immense continents and are barometers of prosperity. But they are usually also very symbolic places that speak to the imagination, full of promise and possibilities.

Art and ports are rarely mentioned in one same breath. Yet, they do have more in common than at first meets the eye. It's more than simply a gateway to the world. Both art and ports contribute to the opening up of the society; they build bridges, embrace the past and take it into the future. They both possess a need for reflection and vision, evolution and challenges.

The Port of Antwerp is by all means the leading European integrated maritime and logistics hub and is, with almost 190 million tonnes of freight, the second largest seaport in Europe. Its position is right in the heart of the European common market, where it has become the center of worldwide trading activities. Optimal connections through a vast network of highway, railroad infrastructures and inland waterways guarantee a smooth throughput to all of the major European markets, both industrial and consumer.

With direct services to over 500 ports, 300 of which are called weekly, the Port of Antwerp offers a wide variety of regular maritime services to all destinations worldwide.

The port of Antwerp has been aware for a long time of India's potential economic growth and started a representative office in Mumbai in 2006 to invest explicitly in a close cooperation with companies and local authorities.
In 2012 about 4.3 million tons of cargo have been shipped between India and Antwerp, a lot of which to and from Mumbai. Together with partner AMTOI, the Antwerp Port Authority developed an digital platform, called India Natie, a business directory tailored to the Indian market.

For Indian people, Antwerp is more than a leading maritime and logistics hub, its rich cultural and trading history appeal strongly to the imagination. Therefore the Antwerp Port Authority supports wholeheartedly this magnificent art exhibition.

Marc Van Peel - *Vice-Mayor of the City of Antwerp, President Antwerp Port Authority*

City Hall, Antwerp



PREFACE

Antwerp, the cultural capital of Flanders, is a metropolis driven by the economy, but also a treasure house of old art and a hothouse for contemporary artists. Year after year tens of thousands of art lovers and tourists from every continent are fascinated by the city's wealth of cultural heritage.

In November 2013 we are exhibiting a top selection from our rich pictorial heritage from the 17TH century in one of the largest museums in Mumbai: the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum (formerly the Prince Of Wales Museum of Western India).
The 16TH century was an eminently flourishing economic era for Antwerp, with its 100,000 inhabitants the largest metropolis in north of the Alps after Paris. Economy and culture went hand in hand and constituted the engine of this prosperous period. After numerous tumultuous religious and political revolts and wars, from 1585 the port of Antwerp was cut of from direct access to the North Sea.
Yet despite the economic downturn of our port and the brain drain to the North, the cultural boom continued well into the 17TH century. It is remarkable that our greatest cultural ambassador, Peter Paul Rubens, peaked only after the fall of Antwerp in 1585. This creativity has been the thread running through the history of Antwerp and it may well have steered the city through its most difficult periods.

Famous painters such as Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck and Jacob Jordaens, but also clavichord builders, manufacturers of display cabinets and wall tapestries, printers of books and prints, etc. could hardly keep up with the demand for artistic creations from all over the world of the time.
A completely new phenomenon developed, namely creating works of art for the 'market' and no longer exclusively commissioned by the church or the aristocracy. New buyers of art, in particular a class of rich merchants, generated new artistic designs: portraits of well-to-do burghers, landscapes, interiors, genre works, picturesque and sometimes titillating and moralising scenes. This image industry was further supported by thousands of prints and illustrations in books, mainly printed by the Antwerp master-printers Plantin and his successors the Moretus family. Distribution to all the countries of Europe, but also to South America and Asia, made the story of Antwerp pictures a success known the world over.

We would like to thank the director-general and his staff at the hospitable museum in Mumbai, subsidy providers, and numerous generous private sponsors.

Mr. Philip Heylen - *Vice-Mayor of the City of Antwerp for Culture and Economy*

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai



PREFACE

It gives me immense pleasure to learn that the Non Profit Association of Museums and Cultural Heritage Antwerp along with the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp will be organizing an exhibition in Mumbai, India, titled "**FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP**. *Exclusive Paintings and Engravings from the 17TH century*" in collaboration with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly Prince of Wales Museum of Western India), Mumbai from 27TH November 2013 to 9TH February 2014.

The foundation stone of this Museum was laid by the Prince of Wales (later King George V) on the 11TH of November, 1905 and the Museum was named Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. The architect of the building, George Wittet, was well known for the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture of which this Museum building is one of the best examples. The Indo-Saracenic style combines Hindu and Islamic elements while incorporating some elements of Western architecture.

The Museum was opened to the public on the 10TH of January, 1922.
Many things have changed since then, Bombay is now known as Mumbai and the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India has been renamed as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. The Museum is set in a well laid out garden which retains its original plan even today.

The Museum is a Grade I Heritage Building of the city.

The exhibition from Antwerp is a unique opportunity for the city of Mumbai in particular, and the people of India at large, to have a close view of rich treasures of 17TH century Flemish paintings by well-known painters and print makers such as Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony Van Dyck, Cornelis Galle, Jacob, Jordaens, David Teniers and many others from the collection of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp and from the collection of Museum Plantin-Moretrus/Printroom, Antwerp.

The exhibition will certainly encourage the young and established artists, art lovers, collectors, scholars and students of Fine Arts to understand the brilliant attainments of Flemish artists, their artistic skills, rich imagination and powers of observation.

The exhibition forms an expression of goodwill between the Indian and Belgian institutions and also between the people of the two nations, and we hope that it will lead to further collaborations in the field of visual and creative arts.

Mr. Sabyasachi Mukherjee - *Director General*
Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, Antwerp



PREFACE

The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp is very proud to be in Mumbai for the first time in its history, with the exhibition "**FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP**. *Exclusive Paintings and Engravings from the 17TH century*".

Our museum is currently closed for renovations. The key collection of the museum is on view in different locations in Antwerp. Yet the collection is rich, and it would be a shame not to share it with other museums in Belgium or abroad. Thus, important pieces are on view in other cities in Belgium, in neighbouring countries like Holland, France or Germany, or further away. In the last couple of months, important pieces from the collection travelled to Rome, Hamburg, Helsinki, Oslo, Japan, Mexico and to the United States.

The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp has an outstanding collection of fine art. The focus is on paintings, although the museum also boasts many marvellous drawings and sculptures. The collection is housed in a fine 19TH century museum building in the heart of Antwerp's South district. The museum is administrated by the Flemish Government.

The paintings collection has works by international famous artists from the 14TH and 15TH centuries like Van Eyck, Van der Weyden, Simone Martini, Antonello da Messina and Jean Fouquet. From the outset, Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens occupied a special place at the Royal Museum. The jewel in the crown is undoubtedly the Rubens Room, which is reached via a monumental staircase. These works of art were the great stylistic inspiration for countless Romantic painters in the 19TH century. Also, an important collection of 19TH and 20TH century art was gradually formed, which includes exceptionally fine works by a.o. James Ensor, René Magritte and Amedeo Modigliani.

After the renovation works the exhibition space of the museum will be increased with 40%. The museum is scheduled to reopen in 2018.

Dr. Paul Huvenne - *Administrator-General*
Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

Print Office, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp



PREFACE

The Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room is a combination unrivalled anywhere in the world. Here you find an old and perfectly preserved printing company, a historic house with household effects that belonged to an important family, an art collection, a beautiful library, an exceptional company and family archive plus a remarkable inner garden, combined with a richly endowed print room.

Around 1550 the founder Christoffel Plantin (c. 1520-1589), a French bookbinder, went to live in Antwerp, which was the most important city in North-West Europe at the time. Antwerp had its Golden Age then and, due to its position as the major printing city in Europe in the second half of the 16TH century, it assumed the role of the crossroads for knowledge exchange, and for the flourishing of science and cultural production.

Here the self-made man Plantin expanded his Officina Plantiniana to become the largest printing/publishing company in Europe with 16 printing presses and around 80 employees. As an adroit businessman he deftly avoided the religious and political breeding grounds of conflict. In addition to religious works, his printing company produced splendid scientific books in the fields of botany, astronomy, cartography, mathematics, medicine and humanist tracts. As a publisher he had commercial contacts all over Europe and printed in 19 different languages. Together with his books, through Germany and Spain he also distributed Antwerp graphic art all over the world.

Christoffel Plantin and after him the Moretus family made their company into a world player and their house into a centre for humanism frequented by major scholars and artists.

The company archive comprises the complete commercial and family history from 1555 to 1876, including the correspondence with scientists, authors, and humanists. It is no surprise that in 2001 first the archive was acknowledged as Memory of the World by UNESCO and in 2005 the entire complex was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Since 1876 the house has been a museum, which nowadays also includes the Print Room and it is a dynamic study centre for the art of book printing and art prints: www.museumplantinmoretus.be.

We are therefore very happy to show the residents of Mumbai a beautiful selection of our extensive print collection in the exhibition "**FLEMISH MASTERPIECES FROM ANTWERP**. *Exclusive Paintings and Engravings from the 17TH century*".

Iris Kockelbergh - *Director*
Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room Antwerp



Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-portrait*

A MIXTURE OF RELIGION AND COMMERCE: ANTWERP ART IN THE 17TH CENTURY

A country at war

From the 15TH up to and including the 17TH century, Antwerp was one of the major European art centres. Belgium as we now know it did not exist yet, and Antwerp, on the River Scheldt, was the centre of what was still 'the Low Countries' –nowadays roughly speaking Belgium and The Netherlands together. This region was also called 'Flanders', although from the 17TH century this name became mainly popular for the Southern Low Countries, the present-day Belgium. In 1566 a religious war started which was to change everything.

The cause of the conflict was the resistance of reformed movements to abuses and excesses within the then all-powerful Catholic Church in Western Europe. In the very early 16TH century reformers such as Luther and Calvin raised the deplorable situations within the Church, up to the point that they and the followers of their respective persuasions finally severed ties with Catholicism. Images and their status also played a core part in the entire discussion.

Visual representations were very important in the Catholic Church, picturing as they did stories from the Bible and the lives of saints for those who could not read. It was just as important that they helped in praying and meditation. For example, by means of prayer the religious person addressed the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Then an image of the Virgin might help that person during prayer to reflect more on the grief Mary had to suffer when her son was crucified. However, the picture as such was only an aid, just an object that had no sacred value whatsoever. But this nuance was lost in the course of time: in the 16TH century a great many religious people ascribed a miraculous function to visual representations as such. Those who prayed at a particular image of the Virgin Mary and subsequently saw their wishes fulfilled therefore assigned this miracle to the image of the Virgin Mary and not to the heavenly Virgin herself. Reformers such as Luther and Calvin thought that the image worship generated in this way was pure idolatry. That is why they pleaded for churches in which images were no longer present, neither painted nor sculpted. In the course of the 16TH century their ideas gained increasingly more ground, and finally in 1566 what became known as 'iconoclasm' ensued. Followers of the reformed faiths broke into churches in Antwerp too and destroyed numerous paintings and sculptures.

However, at that time there were far more issues than just those around religious convictions. In the Low Countries, the Catholic faith was defended by the Spanish rulers, who had maintained a tight hold over the region from the beginning of the 16TH

century. Religious resistance therefore went hand in hand with political protest: the inhabitants of the Low Countries wanted to be independent! Although the war continued until 1648, the early 17TH century was a turning point. In practice the separation between the from then on autonomous and largely Calvinist Northern Low Countries (nowadays more or less equivalent to The Netherlands) and the Catholic South (today's Belgium) that was still under Spanish rule was a fact. So in the Southern Low Countries, to which Antwerp also belonged, religious images continued to be very important, perhaps even more than before. For at that time the ransacked churches had to be filled again with overawing tableaux and thus convince churchgoers of the rightness of Catholicism. Altar pieces were therefore often very large and painted with great boldness. The flamboyant baroque style of Peter Paul Rubens turned out to be the perfect medium to create a powerful visual representation of this message. His fellow-painters Anthony Van Dyck and Jacob Jordaens were also to paint many religious scenes for churches at home and abroad. In this way, the Catholic Church remained the main client for visual artists in the 17TH century as well. But even if a 17TH-century work of art does not seem to be inspired by religion at first glance, it is virtually always the case that the underlying message actually is. This can often be found –literally– in small details.



Fig. 1
Quinten Metsijs (Leuven, c. 1460 - Antwerp 1530)
Saint Christopher
Oil on panel, 106 x 72 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory no. 29

Fig. 2
Anonymous, 15TH century
The Virgin Mary with two gift bearers
Oil on panel, 29 x 36 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory no. 517-518



Art as the mirror of divine nature

The Flemish art of painting is so special because of the fact that artists there enjoyed a tradition of fantastically true-to-nature details. In many works the tiniest flower, the finest blade of grass is represented accurately. This was possible due to the use of oil paint, a technique that in its turn was developed in the Low Countries. Instead of with the traditional egg, paint pigments had been mixed with linseed or walnut oil since the 15TH century. In this way the artist could work with thin layers of paint on top of each other, so that the colours had an unprecedented luminosity. In addition, this technique allows for an enormous sense of detail.

The importance given to those details basically had its roots in the late-medieval mystic tradition. In the 14TH and 15TH century the mystics in the Low Countries actually assumed that the divine is not only revealed in the Bible. Indeed, those who search can find God in the smallest detail of Creation. After all, every petal, every tree was created by God. From this point of view every part of reality is a veiled reference to the divine. This is far-reaching: even the reflection of light in a pearl can be understood as a reference to the divine light. By meditating on everything that a human being sees around him, he can then also create an image of precisely that higher divine reality. It was therefore very much in the interest of artists to represent reality as accurately as possible: only then could the religious person use a visual representation while praying. Therefore the result is 'mimetic' art: art that tries to copy nature as precisely as possible. So it is logical that in the background of their tableaux artists minutely depicted detailed nature representations *(Fig. 1)*, and that there was room for virtually photographically realistic portraits, originally often combined with a religious image *(Fig. 2)*. Although this image concept had its heyday in the 15TH century, it was to resound for a long time afterwards. The landscapes of an artist such as Jan Brueghel *(Fig. ref.)* still testify to such almost miniature-like brushstroke.

But this does not mean that everything the artist depicted was necessarily an exact copy of reality as it existed in a very specific place and at a very specific moment. However accurate it may seem, a landscape such as the one by Jan Brueghel was undoubtedly composed in the painter's workshop. It was only from the 19TH century that artists in Europe really went into the open country with their paints and brushes and painted directly what they saw around them. Before that time they did make sketches outside, but used them in their studios to create scenes that still exceeded the beauty of reality. Flower arrangements or garlands as the one around the portrait of Gonzales Coques and Daniël Seghers *(Fig. ref.)* were composed in this manner: the flowers were sketched individually and combined into a garland on the painting.

Apart from this, we may nevertheless assume that visual art can give us a relatively good idea of how the world must have looked in the 17TH century. What the representations actually show is far from timeless: they allow us to catch a glimpse of the reality that a 17TH-century individual must also have seen to a certain extent. A fairground scene such as the one by Peeter Gijsels, Joos Van Craesbeeck's Death is violent and fast *(Fig. ref.)*, or Pieter Van Bredael's The old ox market in Antwerp *(Fig. ref.)*: each one of these scenes is very far removed from reality as it looks today in present-day Belgium. Yet we cannot just regard this type of scene as a casual and literal representation of reality: such work virtually always also conveys a deeper message.

A religious world

Just as reality has to be understood as a veiled reference to the divine, many a painting has to be considered as a kind of 'pretence' which the viewer has to see through. Only in this way will the religious person find the divine. The leitmotiv in very many of the works is continuous awareness of the sinfulness of mankind, the transience of existence, and therefore the importance of a virtuous life. For Christians –whether they are Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist or of even another persuasion– the image of history can actually be best compared to a line, and a finite line at that. The line starts with Creation and will finish one day with the End of Time. On that day God the Father will judge every human being that ever lived on the basis of his or her individual life, virtues and vices. The person in question will have to spend eternity under the physical and mental pains of hell. However, if someone lived a devout, honest and chaste life, he or she will be granted admittance to the salvation of heaven. Consequently, the individual lives of mankind are also considered as a line, with a clearly to be defined beginning (birth) and end (death) –although that end is relative in the first instance: at the Last Judgement the dead will be resurrected to bear their fate into eternity. It was therefore very important that mankind was aware of the transience of life and of the vanity (in Latin 'vanitas') of worldly temptations. This notion of 'vanitas' is therefore of crucial importance in many 17TH-century works of art. Power and property, knowledge and talent, wealth and enjoyment are worthless because the value of human life as such is extremely relative. The only certainty mankind has is death. That is why it is better to live virtuously, forsaking lust, greed, laziness, arrogance, jealousy, gluttony and envy. In the visual arts 'vanitas' could be expressed in numerous ways. Skulls or hourglasses were favourite motifs, but also soap bubbles or snuffed-out candles appeared frequently. And so did musical instruments: after all sounds are fleeting and fade away as soon as the last note has been played *(Fig. 3)*.



Fig. 3
Franciscus Gysbrechts
(active in Antwerp, last quarter of the 17TH century)
Vanitas
Oil on canvas, 115 x 134 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory no. 5102

Fig. 4
Jan I Bruegel (Brussels, 1568 - Antwerp, 1625)
Flowers in a vase
Oil on panel, 101 x 76 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory no. 643



Subjects that at first sight cannot easily be associated express this message: in that sense still lifes were a favourite subject. Flowers will wilt and fruit will rot –it was also often depicted as such in the painting concerned, here and there the fruit is worm-eaten or exhibits a bruise, or an insect is crawling on the apparently beautiful but in fact already wilted flowers *(Fig. 4)*.

In their turn landscapes may also be the medium of a spiritual dimension. For was the world not created by God? Abel Grimmer's View of Antwerp *(Fig. ref.)* translates such a thought very literally and shows a view of 17TH-century Antwerp, with God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary as protectors of the city at the top. But even if such figures were not depicted explicitly, the landscapes were often permeated by a similar message. For the 17TH-century viewers of these works a painted landscape could be the symbolic summary of the entire cosmos. Every part of nature is God and breathes his spirit. By studying such works the religious person could therefore attempt to understand who composed this wonderful universe. By means of the worldly the believer thus regained insight in the divine.

But very often that believer was also warned that the natural order may be disrupted by mankind's sinful or immoral behaviour. Landscapes with disasters, such as the destruction of the Biblical towns of Sodom and Gomorrah, may point this out very directly.

For example, both towns were destroyed by God because their inhabitants were morally perverted *(Fig. 5)*. Only the virtuous Lot and his daughters were saved. Other depictions, such as Joos Van Craesbeeck's Death is violent and fast *(Fig. ref.)*, held up a negative mirror to the viewer: this was definitely not the way to behave.
Even portraits were not spared a religious-spiritual image agenda. Michaelina Wautiers's Portrait of two girls as Saint Agnes and Saint Dorothea *(Fig. ref.)* shows two girls who are depicted as two female saints. At that time, the holy ladies in question had been dead for hundreds of years. So the girls are only represented with the attributes of the saints, whose names they probably also bore. In this way it was hoped to call on the protection of these saints or to depict these girls as being just as virtuous as their holy namesakes. In other cases too, portraits were often directly or indirectly permeated by religious values: the man in the Family portrait by Cornelis van der Voort is emphatically holding up a pear. That pear is probably the symbol of fertility, and therefore of chaste married love, a Christian virtue by which great store was set in the 17TH century and which contrasted sharply with the vice of lust.

A game of supply and demand

Such scenes were not mainly created to decorate churches, and not even necessarily for high-nobility clients. The unique aspect of Antwerp art in the 17TH century is the fact that the middle classes also increasingly started to play a part: burghers became an important –if not the major– market for the visual arts. As early as the 16TH century Antwerp experienced an economic boom that hardly had its equal in the Europe of the past. An economic boom of this kind resulted in many merchants amassing a fair amount of money. They invested it in impressive houses, in which there was room for decoration in the shape of paintings and prints. This generated a phenomenon that was completely unprecedented at the time. From then on, the creation of visual representations no longer happened on the order of a specific client, such as a monarch or cleric. Consequently artists and their studios also worked for the free market, and that was completely new.
However, those who had to capitalise on the market, had to be commercially smart. For there is no accounting for taste, and what one individual likes may be rubbish in the eyes of someone else. That is why on the art market the offer of subjects and genres was to expand noticeably under the motto of 'suiting every taste'. Religious depictions, which before were virtually the only imaginable subject, were then supplemented by completely new categories such as landscapes, still lifes, or genre scenes. In many cases –as described above– they were indeed still permeated by a religious message or a lesson of life, but it was often undeniably shifted slightly to the background.



Fig. 5
Joachim Patinir
(Bouvignes-sur-Meuse, c. 1480 - Antwerp, 1524)
Lot and his family flee from Sodom and Gomorrah
Oil on panel, 33.5 x 37.5 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory no. 5129

The emergence of these new genres went hand in hand with increasingly more functional production methods in the artist's workshop. In order to comply with the enormous demand for visual representations there was increased distribution of tasks in the studio, so that production became faster and cheaper. That is why from that moment one artist could paint the background of a scene and another the flowers in the foreground. So the producer's specialisation contributed to the generation of new types of visual representations. The little landscapes in the background became more and more prominent, and the figures increasingly smaller until they were completely absorbed and the landscape took centre stage. The same happened to flowers, the still-life parts or the scenes from everyday life, which originally only functioned as decoration for what was virtually always a religious scene. They developed into genres in their own right, which capitalised on the ever increasing demand from the market.
A great many paintings have been preserved in which it can be clearly seen how this kind of task distribution must have occurred in practice. For example, the collaboration between Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder is well documented. In this case Brueghel generally painted the landscapes, while Rubens added the figures. A work like the one by Gonzales Coques and Daniël Seghers *(Fig. ref.)* must have been created in a similar way, with Coques in his capacity of renowned portrait painter as the executioner of the core portrait, and flower painter Seghers who created the surrounding flower garland. The same goes for the work by Abel Grimmer and Hendrick Van Balen: Grimmer painted the landscape and figure painter Van Balen added the saints in the sky.
The golden age of the art of printing can also only be understood against this background. Printing had been known in Europe since the 15TH century and made it possible to distribute visual representations on a hitherto unknown scale. It was easy to make hundreds of copies of an engraving, probably even many more of a woodcut. The possibility of simple reproduction made pictures affordable for anybody, even if they were made to designs of the major artists of the time.

The sum total of this was that hundreds of workshops brought thousands of visual representations on to the market every year. They were distributed from Antwerp: not only all over the Low Countries, but literally all over the known world. Prints were ideal on this level –easy to transport and available in large quantities– but Antwerp paintings were also exported in thousands of copies. In the 17TH century the city on the River Scheldt functioned as the Hollywood or AOL/TimeWarner and CNN today: it played a key role in imaging all over the world.

New self-confidence

However, such up-scaling did not result in poor-quality mass products –on the contrary. The simple fact that so many names of 17TH-century artists are still known is remarkable. We know their names because they signed their work, proudly adding their name or initials to the painting. This phenomenon went hand in hand with the increasing individual self-confidence of the artists themselves. They considered themselves less and less as normal craftsmen, like a cobbler or baker. Instead they positioned themselves more and more as intellectuals, who mainly worked with their brains. After all, does not the artist first imagine what he is going to paint? Does he not need a knowledge of anatomy or of mathematical perspective for this purpose, so that he can evoke reality in a convincing way? In other words, the craft became subordinate to the intellectual work.

Artists who painted a self-portrait in the 17TH century were therefore depicting themselves less and less with the attributes of the craft such as easels, brushes or a palette. Instead they showed themselves as self-confident burghers, often dressed up in smart clothes. There was then no longer a trace of any reference to their professional activity. Here once again Rubens is the best example: he knew better than anybody how to present himself as a scholarly person and man of the world *(Fig. ref.)*. Rubens was actually far more than just any painter or craftsman. To use a Latin term he was a 'pictor doctus', a 'learned artist', who in addition did not just supply paintings to the major churches and courts all over Europe, but who was also active as a diplomat.

The public also contributed to this new self-awareness of the artist by becoming increasingly interested in art and the differences between individual artists. Is the brushwork of one artist not much freer than that of the other? Cannot the use of colour of this artist be clearly distinguished from that of the other? Thus art lovers developed an eye for the difference between the various hands that cooperated in a work of art, or between works of art, and evolved into real 'connoisseurs'. Here too the artists' workshops joined in enthusiastically. The paintings that appeal most to the imagination are some of those created



Fig. 6
Frans II Francken (Antwerp 1581 - 1642)
The collection of paintings of Sebastiaan Leerse
Oil on panel, 77 x 114 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory no. 669

in the later 17TH century by many artists together, whereby each painter was responsible for inserting one or several small works. For the viewer no doubt the sport consisted of guessing which artist belonged to which painting. At the same time such 'art cabinets' provide a good picture of how paintings were hung and presented in the 17TH century: namely, above, under or next to each other, from the ceiling to the floor, and often combined with –mostly antique– sculptures *(Fig. 6)*.

Conclusion

At first sight 17TH-century Antwerp seems to be miles away from today's world. After all, You Tube, Instagram and Pinterest have now taken the place of painted still lifes, landscapes or portraits. But in fact the current explosion of images is unthinkable without the clever marketing strategies and mass production of images in 17TH-century Antwerp. It was here that the seeds were sown for the visual culture that nowadays virtually has the world in its grip. Here also the first literally global-scale thinking and production occurred.

But there is more: the quest of the still-life, landscape or genre painter is little different from the question that preoccupies countless advertising people, spin doctors and the media in general. How can a visual look as

attractiveas possible, can it be presented as beautifully as possible, and at the same time yet also radiate another implicit message? That message obviously no longer points out to today's viewer the importance of virtue or the vanity of life. Yet the way in which the game with images and their meaning is played in the year 2013 is in essence still a continuation of the landscape painter's search for the ideal landscape or the still-life painter's quest for a convincing material representation. Their depictions have to seduce the eye, but consciously or unconsciously often tell a different and personal story.
Last but not least, in more general terms what happened in 17th-century Antwerp can also be called compellingly up-to-date. In the first place, the city thanks its unique advance to global-format metropolis to creation and innovation. These are code words which, together with successful marketing, nowadays are still the key to a successful economic boom and growth. For that reason alone the story of 17th-century Antwerp art is a unique milestone in the entire western history (of art). The events in Antwerp were the basis for (and went hand in hand with) a series of economic, cultural and social developments, the consequences of which reverberate more than ever today: the borderline between present and past was never narrower.

GRAPHICS, A MEDIUM FOR MASS COMMUNICATION

From the 16th century on, prints have been the pre-eminent medium for mass communication. Thanks to prints it became possible to disseminate messages without being limited as for the number of recipients. Printed matter as a mass communication medium, with or without illustrations, became a fundamental element in urban society.

Different prints were produced for the various target markets: there were the political and religious applications, popular use versus collecting, and illustrative applications took on a different shape from complicated humanist image inventions.

In the 16th century the production of prints occurred on the initiative of print publishers. They ordered a design from an artist and looked for the most suitable engraver to etch the copper plate. The publisher took on the entire investment. In the 17th century the initiative to publish came increasingly from artists/painters who preferred to publish their own work so that they could not only supervise the artistic process and their reputation, but also make money into the bargain.

Rubens is the most important example of an artist who personally managed the print production after his work. Undoubtedly he was one of the most frequently copied artists as regards drawings and paintings as well as engravings. Therefore Rubens saw the importance of prints for dissemination of his work and especially for showing his versatility as an artist. He also recognised the artistic qualities of prints. This was more than enough reason to keep the print production after his work in his own hands. In order to protect his work, he also asked for privileges (forerunners of patents) for his inventions/compositions. The engravings made with his approval are marked with the inscription CUM PRIVILEGIO/PRIVILEGIIS.

All prints featuring in this exhibition in Mumbai are mainly copper engravings. This technique consists of a drawing, generally by an artist, which is cut out in mirror image by a specialised engraver into a copper plate with the aid of small chisels (burins) *(Fig. 1)*.

Then ink is rubbed into the engraved lines with a bit of felt. The ink that stays on the surface of the plate is carefully removed. Printing as such on a sheet of paper is done with an intaglio printing press. The inked plate together with a sheet of moistened paper is carefully rotated between 2 cylinders. The paper soaks up the ink in the deeper lines and thus the drawing is neatly printed on the paper as a positive image. *Fig. 2* shows a 20th-century old printing press with which engravings were printed. Around 200 excellent prints could be made from a single engraved copper plate.

Some abbreviations and Latin terms:

- PINXIT: painted
- INVENIT: designed or invented
- FECIT: made
- SCULPSIT: engraved
- EXCUDIT: printed or published
- CUM PREVILEGIO: with privilege or right ("copyright").



Fig. 1

Fig. 2





Pieter Paul Rubens and Jan I Brueghel, *The Lamentation of Christ (detail)*

HISTORY PAINTING

The term 'history painting' is derived from 'histories' or narratives. In the 17TH century this generally involved scenes taken from descriptions of saints' lives, or even more so, from the Bible, the holy book of Christians. In the entire Western history of art the life story of Jesus Christ, but also what preceded or followed it, was undoubtedly the most important subject. Moreover, in 17TH-century Antwerp there was an increased great demand for religious scenes. Many churches and monasteries had suffered badly because of the religious troubles. So there was a great need for new, often monumental altar pieces. But private people too liked to have religious pictures in their houses, since they helped them in praying and meditating. Scenes from the life of Jesus Christ and his mother, the Virgin Mary, were particularly popular.

However, history painting comprised more than just religious art. Scenes taken from Greek-Roman mythology were also in great demand. These narratives are mostly many centuries older than Christian culture. In their turn they are about gods, even though they were gods nobody believed in anymore in the 17TH century. They were in fact often depicted in art because of their symbolic value. The goddess Minerva for example expressed the notion of 'wisdom', and the sea god Neptune stood for anything connected with the sea. The stories about gods as such were also popular because of the lessons of life they contained. They were generally given a Christian re-interpretation. In this way these 'pagan' narratives too could help religious people live a righteous life, so that after death they would go to heaven. But the mythological narratives could also be used by monarchs. For example by having themselves associated with these gods, rulers characterised themselves as virtuous, wise or courageous.

Like nobody else Peter Paul Rubens knew how to depict stories from the Bible as well as from mythology. He did not only paint numerous altar pieces and religious scenes for churches at home and abroad. In fact, virtually all important monarchs in Europe called on his services. For them he created impressive scenes in which he depicted their regal qualities, often on the basis of mythological figures. When a new emissary of the Spanish king arrived in the Low Countries, Rubens was also commissioned to coordinate the artistic part of the festivities. Many triumphal arches were erected on which scenes with mythological figures honoured the monarch. The work *Neptune abates the storming waters* provides an idea as to what these scenes must have looked like.



1

PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 – 1640)

JAN I BRUEGHEL
(1568 – 1625)

The lamentation of Christ

Oil on panel, 55 x 73 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 319

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ is the only born Son of God, who was sent to Earth by his Father. Jesus died on the cross, but for Christians his death is actually a new beginning: by dying Christ takes away the sins of the world. In addition, his death is only temporary: Jesus was resurrected and thus conquered death. According to Christianity, those who believe in him and live according to his example will know eternal life.

However, it has not come this far yet in the painting by Rubens and Brueghel. Christ had died a moment before and his dead body is surrounded by his most faithful disciples. In the background his mother, the Virgin Mary, is also sitting dressed in her traditional blue garment. The rather small dimensions of the work indicate that it was probably not made for a church but for a private individual. The subject, with themes such as death and resurrection, was therefore eminently suitable for a religious person's meditation.

With their sharp contours and soft touch the figures in this work bear witness to the accurate hand of Peter Paul Rubens. However, it is virtually certain that the landscape was painted by Jan I Brueghel's hand. Such types of collaboration were definitely not unusual in the Antwerp of the 17TH century, but the quality of what Rubens and Brueghel achieved together is simply unique.



2

PETER PAUL RUBENS

(1577 - 1640)

Neptune abates the storming waters

Oil on canvas, 191.5 x 181.5 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 233

This work is a smaller version of a scene used in 1635 in the festive arrival of the new governor. He ruled the Low Countries on behalf of the Spanish king. To celebrate the governor's arrival, impressive municipal decorations were erected in Antwerp in the shape of large wooden arches and tableaux. Under the management of Peter Paul Rubens they were provided with dozens of paintings. Altogether the programme was one great hymn of praise to the new governor, his life and his virtues.

Neptune abates the storming waters shows how the new governor, on his way to the Low Countries, travelled by ship from Barcelona to Genoa. This trip was not plain sailing: the ship was hit by a heavy storm. Rubens resorted to the gods of mythology to visualise the story. The centre of the painting is the sea god Neptune with his flapping red garments. He abates the wind that is shown in the top of the painting: two chubby child figures are blowing with rounded cheeks, and in addition one is carrying lightning –a golden yellow bundle of rays. However, Neptune wins the battle and the governor can safely continue his journey.

The sea god is shown here together with three scantily dressed nymphs. This was not unusual: in the 17TH century mythological scenes often were somewhat of an excuse for the sensual depiction of female nudity.



3

PETER PAUL RUBENS

(1577 – 1640)

The education of Mary

Oil on canvas, 194 x 140 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 306

Rubens's tableau shows a scene from the early youth of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. She is presented with her parents, Saint Anna and Saint Joachim, and glances up from her book. This is undoubtedly a Bible, since according to the legend from childhood Mary excelled in knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. That is why she was supposed to have been visited by angels every day. In the painting as well two little angels descend from heaven and crown the very young Virgin with a crown of roses. In this way they already indicate that this girl will be chosen by God.

Rubens's scene was created for the Antwerp monastery church of the order of Barefoot Carmelites. The artist probably painted it in the last decade of his life. This is apparent from his treatment of the paint, typical for Rubens's later painting style, with pasty brushstrokes and a rich colour palette with subtle tones. This is really apparent in Mary's splendid gown. The freely moving touch is also remarkable: Rubens was such a perfect master of the technique that he could, as it were, start to paint freehand.



4

JOHANNES WITDOECK
(1615 - after 1642)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

Abraham and Melchizedek

Address: P.P.Rubens pinxit. H. Witdouc sculp. Aº 1638; Cum privilegiis Regis Christianissimi Principum Belgarum, et Ord. Bataviæ
Copper engraving, plate edge 40.1 x 45.1 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory RH.P.0432

The Biblical high priest Melchizedek brings Abraham bread and wine and blesses him. Around them there are servants and slaves. Theologians considered this scene as a pre-figuration of the Last Supper. Abraham handing over the tithes to Melchizedek refers to the Wise Men's offering to the child Jesus.

Rubens's composition is very reminiscent of Tobias Stimmer's *Neue Künstliche Figuren Biblischer Historien* [New art figures from Biblical history] (Basel 1576), which Rubens knew well and used in his youth as study material and as a basis for drawing.

Various preliminary studies and stages for this engraving have been preserved. The preliminary design, kept in the Albertina in Vienna (Austria), which was made on commission of Rubens, is –apart from the background architecture– a true-to-life reproduction of his painting that is now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Caen (France). Rubens improved this preliminary study, whereby he limited the number of figures.

In the proofs that are in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg (Russia) and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Rubens redrew the background architecture and the page with the horse. This proves that Rubens attached great importance to prints made after his work and the tight grip he kept on the production process.



5

JACOB MATHAM
(1571 - 1631)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

Samson and Delilah

Address: Cum privil. Sa. Cas. M Pet. Pauolo Rubens pinxit; Ja. Matham sculp. et excud.
Copper engraving, plate edge 37.8 x 43.9 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room, Inventory RH.P.0667

This Biblical scene depicts Samson, sleeping on Delilah's lap, while his hair is being cut by a Philistine.

The invincible Samson thus loses his strength, which resided in his hair, and is defeated. An old woman sheds light with a candle. Soldiers are at the ready in the doorway to take Samson prisoner.

Rubens painted the work shortly after his return from Italy on commission of Nicolaas Rockox, the Mayor of Antwerp.

The original painting can be found in the National Gallery in London. There is also an oil sketch of the painting in the Museum in Cincinnati. Although the engraving presents a number of details that are not present in the oil sketch but are in the painting, the oil sketch or a drawing after it seems to be the basis for this engraving. This engraving is the only known print of Jacob Matham after a painting by Rubens. Although for Rubens the effect of light and the chiaroscuro contributed to the dramatics in certain parts, this is somewhat lacking in Matham's print.

He dedicated the print to Rockox; it may have been made with his approval. The absence of Rubens's privilege indicates that the initiative to make this engraving did not come from Rubens. It was only at a later stage that Rubens developed interest in disseminating his work by means of prints.



6

PAULUS PONTIUS
(1603 - 1658)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

The massacre of the innocents

Address: Pet. Paul. Rubenius pinxit, Paulus Pontius sculpsit. Cum privilegio Anno 1643
Copper engraving, plate edge 62.4 x 91 cm – printed in two plates, paper glued together
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 20161

The three Wise Men from the Bible story predicted the coming of a 'king of Jews'.

The Jewish King Herod appointed by the Romans felt threatened and had all young male children in Bethlehem killed. The focus here is on this dramatic event.

The theme of the Massacre of the innocents was depicted by Rubens several times. This print was based on a painting Rubens created around 1635 and which is now in the Alte Pinakothek in Vienna (Austria).

In contrast with the earlier version that makes the ruthless massacre the centre of a compact scene, this version offers hope for divine salvation by the depiction of the angels scattering rose petals over the little martyrs. The action is spread over various clusters, brought together around the central figure of the mother who stretches her hands up in the air and shows a cloth impregnated with children's blood.

In his later work Rubens denounced the horrors of war and especially the resulting suffering of women and children. His correspondence contained many references to the consequences of war: he therefore longed for 'a golden age' instead of 'an iron period'.

Paulus Pontius was an apprentice of Lucas Vorsterman, followed in his footsteps and worked as an engraver for Rubens from 1626 to 1631. However, the print was made after Rubens's death and bears the date of 1643.



7

SCHELTE ADAMSZ BOLSWERT
(1586 - 1650)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

The Judgement of Solomo

Address: P.P.Rubens pinxit; Cum privilegijs Regis Christianissimi, Serenissimæ Infantis, et Ordinum Confederatorum; B. a Bolswert sculp. Et excudit
Copper engraving, plate edge 44 x 51 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP.18625

The Biblical Solomon is sitting on his throne and proclaims the judgement. Two women claim to be the mother of a baby after one of them had exchanged her deceased child for the other's baby. Solomon judges that an executioner will hack the living child into two, so that each mother receives half a child.

The real mother begs for the child to be given the other mother who is looking on intently. At which point Solomon assigns the child to the real mother. Theologians considered the scene as a pre-figuration of the Last Judgement.

Of all the kings of Israel, Solomon was seen as the most powerful and especially the wisest. In the law courts Solomon's judgement was considered to be an excellent example of jurisdiction.

The painting that was the basis for this print was originally displayed in the town hall of Brussels (Belgium) to illustrate the motto: 'Here the administrator does justice to those who merit it'. Nowadays it is in the Statens Museum fur Kunst in Copenhagen (Denmark).

The print was produced at the request of Rubens, who in this way wanted to protect his composition from copyists and plagiarism.



8

SCHELTE ADAMSZ BOLSWERT
(1630 - 1645)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

The conversion of St. Paul

Address: P.P.Rubens pinxit – Cum Privilegijs Regis Christianissime, Serenissimo Infantis et ordinum confederatorum – S. à Bolswert Sculps. Et excudit
Copper engraving, plate edge 44.9 x 60.3 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory RH.P.1026

Saul was a persecutor of the Jews who converted and as Paul became the 'apostle of pagans'. When he was travelling to Damascus, he had a vision. The mental image he perceived made himself known with the words: 'I am Jesus who you are persecuting'. Paul fell from his horse and lost his sight for several days as the result of the vision.

Prancing horses that throw off their horsemen were a recurring theme for Rubens. For the depiction Rubens was inspired by Italian masters such as Caravaggio. As for composition and in details like the horse we see strong relationships with other works by Rubens, including the hunting scenes that can also be viewed in this exhibition (see no. 31 & 32).

Rubens painted at least three works with this theme. This print was based on the last version, namely a painting that used to be in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin (Germany), but was lost in a fire in 1945. As was frequently the case, the engraving was dedicated to a personality, in this case Antoon Triest, Bishop of Gent (Belgium). The work is an example of perfect mastery.



9

CORNELIS I GALLE
(1576 - 1650)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

Judith beheading Holofernes

Copper engraving, plate edge 52,5 x 37,7 cm
Address: Cornelis Galle sculp. et excud.
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 18513

This scene from the Bible focuses on the heroic Judith. She saved her people by getting the cruel Assyrian general Holofernes drunk in his army tent and then cutting off his head.

The painting on which this print is based disappeared. It may have been a work from his youth that was part of the collection of the Prince of Wales, the later English King Charles I, which Rubens mentioned in a letter dated 13 September 1621.

The Great Judith as this print is also called is not only Galle's masterpiece, it is also the very first print for which Rubens personally took the initiative.

It does not yet have a privilege, a kind of patent that gave him the sole right to disseminate his composition in the form of a print, because he did not have it yet.

It does, however, have a dedication to Jan Woverius, a friend who together with Rubens was the pupil of the hilosopher Justus Lipsius. Rubens promised Woverius to dedicate his first print to the latter. A preliminary study for this engraving made by Cornelis Galle and retouched by Rubens is in the Nationalmuseet in Stockholm (Sweden).



10

SCHELTE ADAMSZ BOLSWERT
(1586 - 1650)

After
JACOB JORDAENS
(1593 - 1678)

Jupiter fed by the goat Almathea

Address: Iac. Iordaens inuenit;
S. à Bolswert sculpsit
Copper engraving, plate edge 35.9 x 46.7 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room,
Inventory PK.OP. 18031

Jacob Jordaens personally used the etching needle several times. He etched religious scenes as well as genre scenes and made rather creditable work. However, the engravings that Schelte à Bolswert made after Jordaens's work are among the most beautiful Jordaens prints.

In this Roman mythological scene a nymph is milking the goat Amalthea for the little Jupiter. He is sitting on the right as a naked child on the ground with a feeding bottle in his hand. On the left a laughing satyr with a tambourine is watching.

The text indicates that Jupiter's capriciousness in love was due to the fact that he was fed goat's milk in his youth. Goats were actually considered to be lecherous animals.

The print is based on a painting made by Jordaens between 1630 and 1635 and is in the Louvre in Paris (France).



11

SCHELTE ADAMSZ BOLSWERT
(1586 - 1650)

After
JACOB JORDAENS
(1593 - 1678)

Pan playing the Flute

Address: Iacques. Iordaens inuent: et pinxit; S. à Bolswert sculpsit
Copper engraving, plate edge: 33.9 x 42.4 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 18033

The mythological Pan as a shepherd plays a flute sitting down near his flock of sheep and goats. The Latin caption states: 'Pan is sitting laughingly under the sprouting top of a beech and sings in a sweet melodious voice. The youthful flock is dancing as an expression of happiness'.

The figure of Pan and the little he-goat in front of him were copied from a work which Jordaens painted between 1630 and 1635 and which is now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (The Netherlands). The composition was extended on the four sides, so that it became more spatial.



12

THEODOOR VAN THULDEN
(1606 - 1669)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

The voyage of the Cardinal-Infant from Barcelona to Genoa

Illustration for Gaspar Gevaerts Pompa Introïtus, plate 7, page 15
Address: P.P.Rubens inuent C. Geuartius Iud. Th. a. Thulden delin et scalps
Etching, plate edge 28 x 34.4 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 19511

At the request of the Antwerp municipal magistrate, on 17 April 1635 a souvenir album was published to commemorate the triumphant arrival of the new governor of the Low Countries Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand of Austria in Antwerp. In this book the decoration made for the Joyous Arrival was described and depicted. The accompanying text was written by Gaspar Gervatius, who together with Peter Paul Rubens created the concept for the decoration. The prints were made by Van Thulden.

This etching represents the painting that decorated the left wing of the welcoming arch on the Mechelseplein in Antwerp, which is now in the Fogg Art Museum in Massachusetts (USA) and of which another version can be seen here (no. 2).

The image was built up on two different levels. In the foreground a dynamic scene with Neptune in his chariot with sea nymphs while chasing away the north wind Boreas.

In the background the war fleet that took the Cardinal-Infant from Barcelona (Spain) to Genoa (Italy) as part of his victory trip from Spain to The Netherlands in 1635. Ferdinand was appointed governor of the Low Countries and successor to the Infante Isabella of Spain by his brother Philip IV, King of Spain.



13

THEODOOR VAN THULDEN
(1606 - 1669)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

Stage of Mercury (Mercurius Abituriens)

Illustration for Gaspar Gevaerts 'Pompa Introïtus Ferdinandi', page 147a
Address: P.P. Rub. Inuent. C. Geua. Epigraphis illustrabat T. a Thul. Fe.
Caption: MERCVRIVS ABITVRIENS /
Etching, plate edge 44.8 x 51.4 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room Inventory. PK.OP. 19509

This triumphal arch stood in the Hoogstraat and had to remind the Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand of the economic decay Antwerp experienced in the Southern Low Countries because of the closure of the River Scheldt, the access route to the North Sea.

The Northern Low Countries closed off the Scheldt estuary in 1574 and levied a high toll on all goods going to and from Antwerp by ship, so that trade became difficult. In fact it was to take until 1863 before the Scheldt was actually opened up and the port of Antwerp could flourish again.

In the *Stage of Mercury* Rubens showed how the city's trade and boom suffered from the continuing war between the Spanish (Southern) Low Countries and the Republic of the United (Northern) Netherlands.

In the central scene we see Mercury leaving Antwerp. On the left a scene with Abundance and Wealth, and on the far left Comus, the god of festivity, which refers to the good days. On the right of the central painting we see Poverty and on the far right Industria, the daughter of Poverty. Yet the latter figure represented the hope of the Antwerp people who, in spite of the closure of the Scheldt and therefore cessation of normal trade, concentrated on the production of textile and luxury products.



Anthony Van Dyck, *Portrait of a nobleman on a horse (detail)*

PORTRAIT

Together with religious representations, portraits belonged to the major products of the art of painting in the Low Countries. In an era in which there was no film or photography yet, a painting was the only way to reflect and preserve an individual's image. But besides portraits could communicate implicit messages in all sorts of ways. For example, the equestrian portrait was reserved for kings, nobility and commanding officers, and confirmed their status. On the other hand, the family portrait was very popular with burghers. The members of a family were presented making music together, or with flowers or fruit: all symbols that alluded to the values of marital faithfulness, family harmony and f ertility. The way in which the family members lovingly touch each other indicated mutual togetherness within the family.

Of all 17TH-century portrait painters from Antwerp, Anthony Van Dyck is probably the most important. He even achieved becoming a knighted court artist to the English king. Indeed after his death he was buried in the choir of the London Saint Paul's Cathedral, a great honour. Van Dyck not only worked for the English monarch, but also for the governess of the Low Countries, the Italian aristocracy and the elite of European nobility. What was so special about Van Dyck was that he succeeded in depicting his clients in a subtle and slightly elitist way. Although he had learned that technique from Rubens, his teacher, he really brought it to full fruition during his years-long stay in Italy. His painting touch also contributed to the end result: Van Dyck did not shy away from applying the paint in a very free, even almost rough way. Thus he succeeded in depicting his sitter in a convincing and unequalled lively manner.

Anthony Van Dyck was to literally influence European portrait painting for centuries. In Antwerp his most direct follower was Gonzales Coques. He painted refined portraits with a great sense of detail and elegance, and is therefore sometimes also called 'little Van Dyck'. But Michaelina Wautier too is indebted to Van Dyck. Because of her life-like, astutely characterised portraits full of vitality, she ranked highly among the members of the Brussels's court.



14

PETER PAUL RUBENS

(1577 – 1640)

Self-portrait

Oil on canvas, 52.7 x 40.7 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 949

The 17th-century Antwerp art of painting was dominated by the personality of Peter Paul Rubens. More than anybody else this painter determined the artistic face of the Low Countries in the 17th century. Whether it concerned monumental altar pieces for churches, mythological scenes for the noblest of nobility, portraits, landscapes, hunting scenes, tapestry designs, or the designs for the festive arrival of the governor: Rubens could do it all.

What makes Rubens so special is not only the fact that he was unrivalled in successfully renewing existing image formulas. He also displayed fantastic artistic adaptability and a commercial sense. During his years-long stay in Italy he therefore painted in a way which mainly appealed to the local aristocracy. After his return to Antwerp he hooked on to the imaging traditions that were mainly popular there. In addition Rubens was a real learned person: he was a friend of the great scholars of his time, worked regularly as a diplomat, and personally mastered classical literature better than anyone else. He was also a genius at depicting this in his mythological scenes.

So it is no surprise that in this portrait the painter did not represent himself as a 'normal' craftsman, with brushes, a palette or an easel. Instead Rubens showed himself as a wealthy gentleman, a businessman who has achieved it all and who therefore looks at the world with self-confidence.



15

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

(1599 – 1641)

Portrait of a nobleman on a horse

Oil on canvas, 262 x 163 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 892

It is not known who is portrayed here. However, because it is an equestrian portrait, it is very likely that this gentleman originated from the highest social class. Equestrian portraits were in fact reserved for kings, nobility and commanding officers. Maybe here it concerned a descendant of the illustrious Balbi family from Genoa: after all Anthony Van Dyck stayed in Italy for years. That was not exceptional in the 17TH century: Rubens had also previously been there, as had numerous other artists before and after him. They all studied the remains of antique Roman civilisation as well as the more recent works of art by masters such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.

The young Van Dyck was exceptionally successful in Italy, and he developed relationships there with virtually all significant rulers. In the portraits he made of these people the artist exquisitely captured their noble, distinguished personalities. He achieved this effect by portraying the subject full length and slightly from below. The sublime representation of fabrics and textures also contributes to this sense of wealth and elegance. In addition, Van Dyck always added something ethereal, almost careless to his compositions: the portrayed individual is never over-formal, but always elegant.



16

CORNELIS VAN DER VOORT

(1576 – 1624)

Portrait of a family

Oil on canvas, 119 x 178.8 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 996

Cornelis Van der Voort's scene shows an Antwerp bourgeois family: a father, a mother and their little son. A caption above every portrayed individual states his or her age. At the moment the work was painted, the man was 43 years old, his wife 30 and their son only 16 months. Although the child is wearing a dress, it is actually a boy: in 17TH-century Antwerp small boys and girls were dressed in largely the same way. However, the hairstyle and the chain worn diagonally over the chest with a 'jingle bell' –a kind of rattle– make it clear that the child here is a boy. His coral chain and bracelets were intended as talismans to ward off evil.
The man, woman as well as the child are dressed in rich black clothing and are wearing so-called 'millstone collars', expensive circular collars made of pleated fine linen cambric.

Sometimes it took no less than 15 metres of fabric for one single collar. Real show-off pieces were so big that they had to be supported by a small wire frame. Women wore their hair pinned up and men kept their hair short so it could not get entangled in the collar.
In this portrait the father emphatically displays a pear. Fruit was often part of family portraits: in a symbolic way they indicated the fertility of the marriage.



17

GONZALES COQUES

(1614 – 1684)

Portrait of a lady

Oil on copper, 22 x 17 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 34

Today the identity of this lady is no longer known. It is a fact that she must have been very wealthy. This is indicated by her beautiful gown and her striking jewels: she is wearing earrings, a necklace, pearl bracelets, an ornamental pin with a cut diamond or rock crystal, and a gold timepiece. The monumental pillar and the heavily draped red curtain also contribute to the refined wealthy sense the representation emanates. It is not surprising that the bourgeoisie and aristocracy in the 17TH century were very fond of Coques's paintings. With their sense of elegance they complied excellently with the ostentation of nobility and the rich merchant class. In 1671 Coques even became court painter to the governor of the Low Countries.

Gonzales Coques was highly influenced by Anthony Van Dyck's ingenious style of painting. His *Portrait of a lady* combines an effervescent play of light and shadow with a great sense of detail and a smooth, almost enamel-looking surface. This finish was also achieved by the fact that the work was created on copper, a medium that was very popular in Antwerp, particularly in the early 17TH century. Copper in fact allowed for an extremely fine brushstroke and a splendid shining finish.



18

MICHAELINA WAUTIER

(worked from c. 1643 – 1660)

Two girls presented as Saint Agnes and Dorothea

Oil on panel, 89.7 x 122 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 599

The two little girls portrayed here are not shown in their own 17TH-century clothes. Instead they are depicted in the costumes and attributes of Saint Dorothea and Saint Agnes. Thus the girl on the left has a basket of roses and apples, typical for Saint Dorothea. The palm branch in her hand was also a religious symbol, a sign of martyrdom. In contrast, the child on the right is presented with a lamb, the traditional companion of Saint Agnes. The lamb refers to Jesus Christ, who is often described as the 'Lamb of God'. It is very likely that in real life too these girls had the names of Dorothea and Agnes. Their holy namesakes would then have been their patron saints: their heavenly counterparts and protectors.
Wautier painted the two children in a sensitive and intimate manner. The scene is like a snapshot, made when the girls were dreaming away for a moment. In this way the artist enhanced the atmosphere of innocence, purity and loveliness. But also the heavy drape, the reflecting effect of light on the satin of the dress and the almost careless hairstyle make this portrait a real technical masterpiece.



19

MICHAELINA WAUTIER

(worked from c. 1643 – 1660)

Portrait of a young man

Oil on canvas, 70 x 58 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 5149

The artist Michaelina Wautier is a mysterious personality, who left a limited but qualitatively impressive oeuvre. She painted flower arrangements as well as portraits and history scenes. It is even more curious because she was a woman: in the 17TH century women hardly ever or never received professional training and certainly not as a painter. Whoever was talented was assumed to paint small-scale flower arrangements or at the most still lifes. More ambitious scenes were considered to be men's work. However, Wautier was successful even in her lifetime. At least four of her paintings were in the possession of the governor of the Low Countries, Leopold-Wilhelm, who knew what good art was. He was a keen collector, who not only owned top-class works by Rubens and Van Dyck, but also numerous works of prominent Italian artists. The fact that precisely this governor also owned so many of Wautier's paintings therefore says a great deal about the quality of her work.

Wautier's style of painting was very close to that of Anthony Van Dyck, with a great feeling for the tactile perception of the materials and subtle use of colour. Yet her works always also testify to a very personal approach, and to unequalled liveliness and elegance.



20

ANTHONY VAN DYCK

(1599 - 1641)

Portrait of Pieter Brueghel the Younger

Address: Ant. van Dyck fecit aqua forti.
Etching, plate edge 24.3 x 15.5 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP.12456

Pieter Brueghel the Younger looks directly at the viewer; it is striking that he is somewhat cross-eyed. In his right hand he holds a rolled-up piece of paper, the right arm is supported by the draped cloak, alluding to a Roman toga.

Van Dyck probably started on the preparation for his *Iconography* or *Icones Principum Virorum* immediately after his return from Italy. Originally the *Iconography* was a collection of portraits of artists and art collectors, but later the project was extended to portraits of monarchs, commanding officers, statesmen and scholars.

It was Van Dyck's intention to personally etch the faces and to have the clothing and background finished by an engraver, but he himself only etched 18 portraits of mainly fellow-artists who were his friends.

This etching of the portrait of Pieter Brueghel the Younger was also created completely by Anthony van Dyck. Afterwards Van Dyck called on the assistance of Paulus Pontius, Schelte Adamsz Bolswert, Pieter de Jode, and Lucas Vorsterman, engravers with whom he may well already have worked in Rubens's workshop. Most of the prints in the *Iconography* were based on drawings from life that Van Dyck himself made with a view to his *Iconography*.

As preparation for this etching Van Dyck made a drawing which is now in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire in Chatsworth (England).



21

ERASMUS QUELLINUS
(1607 - 1678)

After
PAULUS PONTUS
(1603 - 1658)
ANTHONY VAN DYCK
(1599 - 1641)

Portrait of Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck

Address: Ant. Van Dijck facies pinxit; Erasm. Quellinius delin. Franc. Huberti excudit Antuerpiæ Paulus Pontius facies sculp.
Copper engraving, plate edge 35.6 x 45.5 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory RH.P.0506

On the left we see Rubens, on the right Van Dyck, placed in two lyre-shaped planes and surrounded by decorative wings, fruit, and trumpet-blowing putti (small nude children). Under the portraits lie the painters' coats of arms. In the centre the heads of Mercury and Apollo are depicted. In the foreground two putti are crowning with laurels a lion whose paw is resting on the globe. Here Erasmus Quellinus brought together two grandmasters of Antwerp baroque painting. For this purpose he went back to the prints which in their turn were based on a self-portrait of the masters. Rubens's self-portrait, which can be viewed in this exhibition (no. 14), was converted into an engraving by Paulus Pontius, and served as the basis for the engraving by Quellinus.

The portrait of Van Dyck went back to a self-portrait of Van Dyck that he made for his *Iconography*. The portrait did not achieve the grace of Van Dyck's self-portrait. The edge decoration is by far more impressive, with every detail contributing to the glorification of the two grandest masters of the Antwerp school of painting.

Theodoor Boeyermans started from this engraving for the portraits of Rubens and Van Dyck in his painting *Antverpia Pictorum Nutrix* (Antwerp is feeding the art of painting).



22

LUCAS VORSTERMAN
(1596 – 1675)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

Portrait of Charles de Longueval, count of Bucquoy

Address: P.P.Rubens inuent. Cum privilegiis Lucas Vorsterman sculp. et excud
Copper engraving, 62.5 x 48.5 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP.20124

Longueval was a hero from the Thirty Years' War, a war in Europe between the Holy Roman Empire and the Protestant state from 1618 to 1648. He was killed in Hungary in 1621.

Rubens was asked to make a design for an engraved portrait, which for commercial reasons had to be ready soon. The portrait shows almost half the body of Charles de Longueval in a cartouche surrounded by symbols: inverted torches as a symbol for mourning; the chained river god with the vase and the urban virgin Antwerp with a crown, which are symbolic for the conquered areas; Hercules tramples Dissension and Hydra, who stood for envy and enmity; the eagle pushes its claw firmly into the globe and looks intently at the palm branch that Victory is holding in front of it. The eagle is being crowned with laurels by Church and Religion.

The design for the print, an oil sketch, is in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg (Russia).



Pieter Gysels, *Flemish Kermesse (detail)*

GENRE

'Genre painting' is a collective term for virtually all scenes that are not Biblical, mythological, literary or historical, but were apparently mainly taken from everyday life. Folk scenes such as kermesses [fairs] or processions, but also homely scenes or groups of peasants all belong to this category. At first sight these scenes seem to provide a good picture of how life was lived in the Low Countries of the 17TH-century. For example a representation like Pieter Gysels's *Flemish Kermesse* convincingly shows the atmosphere of a market day. There are short theatre plays, people are buying food, are having teeth pulled or fall victim to cheats. Trading is going on, fish is supplied, games are played and there is dancing. But it could also be less merry: Vrancx's scene of ransacking may have been all too recognisable for the inhabitants of the Low Countries plagued by wars at that time.

Frequently, however, all is not what it seems: even if these depictions seem so true to life, they were always staged. In many cases they therefore carry a deeper meaning. Sometimes they hold a negative mirror up to the viewer, and show the latter mainly how not to behave. At other times they do precisely the opposite and are the expression of the moral ideals of the burghers; a harmonious music-playing couple for example refers to a unified marriage.

Although he also created history paintings and portraits, Jacob Jordaens (1593 – 1678), born and bred in Antwerp, was mainly an icon as a genre painter. In an unrivalled way he succeeded in accurately characterising folk types in a lively way. Moreover, he also did this in his religious and mythological scenes: his saints are no inaccessible heroes but people of flesh and blood.



23

PIETER GYSELS

(1621 – 1690)

Flemish Kermesse

Oil on copper, 60 x 83 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 885

Pieter Gysels's *Kermesse* may look true to life, but it is in fact probably a fictional scene. Yet the representation shows all typical elements of a 17TH-century small town in the Low Countries: a large town hall, a church –on the left between the trees– and brick-built and/or wooden houses. The background depicts an undulating landscape. But it is mainly in the foreground that all sort of things are going on. Peasants are drinking and dancing, peddlers are selling their wares. Plays are performed, boats are being sailed, and children are playing. A coach is making its way through the masses and navigates alongside barking dogs and among the pigs walking in between the merrymakers. For an art-loving public such representations were particularly attractive: there was so much going on that people never tired of them.

Originally the kermesses were linked with religious holy days. A procession around the church was followed by public entertainment and amusement, frequently for several days. From far and away, people came to the town or village to make merry, eat, drink and buy goods. A kermesse was often combined with an annual fair. However, people also had to watch out for quacks, and at times drunkenness also resulted in trouble. In addition, because of the abundance of entertainment the link with the religious holy day was lost. According to one of the 17TH-century governors, Antwerp people made merry 'like animals'! This was of course not good for their salvation. Therefore the church and government severely cut down the number of kermesses and their duration.



24

DAVID II TENIERS

(1610 – 1690)

The smokers

Oil on panel, 31.3 x 53.2 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 5043

In many of his scenes David II Teniers represented the lower class, and this painting is no different. It shows simple young men who have gathered in a dark and windowless ‘smokers’ house’. Teniers’s scene strikingly depicts all stages of smoking enjoyment: from mixing and heating up the tobacco and lighting the pipe to the climax of the pleasant inhalation, almost as in a trance, and holding in and blowing out the smoke. Nothing is disrupting these quiet pleasure seekers: it almost looks as if they want to incite the viewer to follow their example. But before the latter does so, he should think twice. There is a nearly invisible extinguishing candle on the wall at the top. This refers to the transience of sensual enjoyment. Whoever gives in to it will find destruction in the end, and not the way to the heavenly gates.

Teniers was an extremely productive and popular painter: many hundreds of works by him are known. Moreover, he was also the manager of the collection of paintings of the governor of the Low Countries and worked as his court painter. In 1663 he founded the Antwerp Academy, one of the first modern art schools in Europe.



25

JAN COSSIERS

(1600 – 1671)

The smoker

Oil on canvas, 133 x 107 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 38

A fashionably dressed gentleman is lighting his pipe with pleasure, while a young servant next to him looks at the viewer. There could hardly be more contrast with Teniers's simple young men. Yet they as well as Cossiers's mundane gentleman are indulging in the addictive pleasure of smoking.

Tobacco originated from Latin America and was only spread in Europe in the second half of the 16TH century. First, doctors thought that the leaves of the tobacco plant were mainly a good medicine for sleeping badly, but very soon the stuff became universally accepted. Pipe smoking was spread by seamen and soldiers, and in the 17TH century it developed into a real craze and hobby. Although it was fought as an evil by Church and state, this pleasure –or should it be called a vice?– soon found its way to all levels of the population. So depictions of it also became popular.

After the death of Rubens in 1640, Cossiers developed into one of the most prominent painters in Antwerp. His scenes were brushed smoothly in a very broad and free stroke, and he had a preference for striking light-dark contrasts. In addition, his paintings with their lively gestures and expressions testify to great psychological insight.



26

DAVID II TENIERS

(1610 – 1690)

Duet

Oil on panel, 33.5 x 25 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 726

David II Teniers painted many of this type of 'small concerts', often occurring in a pub. A man is playing the 'theorbo', a string instrument from the lute family. He is attentively following the woman who seems to be very focussed on her flute-playing. Although this representation looks true to life, it is virtually certain that it is not: the meaning is mainly symbolic. The interplay between the man and the woman refers to unanimity and harmony within matrimony. However, everything in this representation is far from being all rosy: the choice of the musical instrument for the woman lends the scene an ambiguous, somewhat presumptuous meaning. Maybe the man is not her husband? On the right a second woman is watching.

She indicates that nothing goes unnoticed, and that one had better keep in step. The snuffed candle against the wall is also a warning: it refers to the vanity of life, and likewise the importance of death. Because only by living virtuously could the religious individual attain heaven. Music is fleeting too, for after all everybody knows that all good things come to an end.

Teniers's scene is a typical example of moralising genre tableaux: at first sight the representation looks nice and attractive, but it still tries to communicate an important lesson of life to the viewer.



27

JACOB JORDAENS

(1593 – 1678)

A maidservant with a basket of fruit and two lovers

Oil on canvas, 118 x 154 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 5049

A young woman with rolled-up shirt sleeves is looking with a smile at the viewer. In her arms she holds a basket of grapes, and she is standing in front of a richly decorated open window. Inside there is a couple in love, and next to the fruit seller there is a parrot.

The exact meaning of this scene is not completely clear. Is it a play on the contrast between the requited love of the couple inside and the obviously unrequited love outside? Did the artist perhaps mean the contrast between day (outside) and night (inside)? Or should the scene mainly evoke an atmosphere of wealth, abundance and happiness?

Whatever the underlying meaning, Jordaens showed once again in this work that he was a master in recognisable characterisation of common people. But that is not all: the way in which he combined the two sources of light, the free stroke and rich colour effects also demonstrate that he was a virtuoso artist. It is not surprising that after the death of Rubens in 1640, and that of Van Dyck one year later, the painter became the most sought-after artist in Antwerp, and that he made numerous works of art for clients all over Europe.



28

PEETER VAN BREDAEL

(1629 – 1719)

The old ox market in Antwerp

Oil on canvas, 135.5 x 191.2 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 784

The genre of townscapes, which was still very new in the 17TH century, complied with the sense of local pride and chauvinism of the rich middle classes. So it is logical that in this type of representation towns were always depicted at their best: traces of poverty or crime and waste are neatly left out. Instead there was great attention for historical buildings and picturesque details.

In that sense Van Bredael's *Old ox market* is certainly no exception. The scene shows the cattle trade in the Antwerp of yesteryear. The market place is bustling with activity –which would undoubtedly have appealed to the mercantile buying public. In the foreground, children are up to mischief, there is wheeling and dealing, and vendors attempt to keep their animals together or precisely away from each other. Van Bredael shared this sense of the anecdotal with Pieter Gijsels or Jan I Brueghel, and he was highly influenced by them.

The 'Ox Market' still exists in Antwerp, but only as the name of a square: nowadays there is no longer any trace of cattle, and the terraces are mostly frequented by university students.



29

JOOS VAN CRAESBEECK

(1606 – 1661)

Death is violent and fast

Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 103.2 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 850

In front of a pub, next to an upturned table and all kinds of household goods, a young man is lying on the ground bleeding. On the left the murderer is surrounded by a throng of threatening peasants. One of them wants to go for the murderer with a pitcher, but gets a nasty stab with a knife in his torso. Death, in the shape of a skeleton stripped of flesh in a white cloak, threateningly holds a bone in the face of the attacker. On the stone at the bottom right there is a beer mug from which a small skeleton emerges. Next to it the caption: 'Death is violent and fast, beware of sins'. The rest of the text also summons people in particular not to kill anybody. In addition, in the front lies a large pair of spectacles, again with a caption: 'It is not my fault that people do not have better sight'. In other words, because of his foolishness mankind is blind.

Van Craesbeeck became very popular with this type of small theatrical scenes with fighting peasants and expressive, often somewhat malicious figures. The intention of such works was virtually always moralising. That is clearly the case here too: drink and human folly are the cause of violence and death. The viewer should therefore really keep away from them.



30

SEBASTIAAN VRANCX

(1573 – 1647)

Landscape with a robbery of travellers

Oil on panel, 51 x 75 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 898

In the middle of a road there is a wagon that was lured into an ambush. The travellers are being robbed of their possessions. In the background stands a large cross, with which the painter gave the scene a religious dimension. This points out the transience of life on earth and the importance of a virtuous life.

In the turbulent 17TH century such plundering was probably a daily concern. The wars that kept literally all of Europe in their grip caused great misery, poverty and destruction everywhere. Impressed by such events, Vrancx painted numerous representations with cavalry charges, pillage, robberies and battles. When these matters were involved, Vrancx actually knew what he was talking about as he himself was a captain of the municipal home guard.

In addition he also wrote plays and was a prominent member of the 'Romanists', an exclusive Antwerp club for lovers and travellers of Italy. This says a great deal about the status an artist enjoyed in 17TH-century Antwerp.
But Vrancx was also a clever businessman: with this type of depictions he deftly capitalised on the demands of the public for colourful and highly turbulent scenes, with a great sense of realism.



31

JONAS SUYDERHOEF
(1615 – 1686)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

The lion hunt

Address: P.P.Rubens Pinxit I. Sÿderhoef Scupsit
P. Soutman Editor DDD, Cum Privi Sa.Ca.M. P. Soutman Excud
Copper engraving, plate edge 46.5 x 58.5 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 20152

Six men, four of them on horseback, are involved in a fight with a lion and a lioness. The lion drags a Moor from his prancing horse. In the agitation a lioness is trying to get its young to safety. Another lion is clawing its paw into a half-naked man who is planting a dagger in the animal's abdomen.

This print also goes back to a painting belonging to a group of four that Rubens created for Prince-Elector Maximilian of Bavaria (Germany) in 1615-1616. Around 1800, under Napoleon, the painting was taken to France, where it was destroyed in the fire in the Museum of Bordeaux in 1870.

It is very unlikely that Rubens was involved in the production of this print, since Soutman stated that he conceived the composition, which Rubens would certainly not have appreciated. Soutman's print was dated after Rubens's death.



32

PIETER CLAESZ SOUTMAN
(1580 - 1657)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

The hippopotamus and crocodile hunt

Address: P.P. Rubens Pinxit. P. Soutman. Inuenit Effigiauit. et Excud. Cum Priuil.
Copper engraving, plate edge 44 x 62.8 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 20145

Three horse riders are harassing a hippopotamus. The powerful jaws of the animal are the centre of the composition. A dog is attacking the cornered animal. Next to it a fallen hunter. Bottom left there is a dead hunter, who will soon be devoured by a crocodile. The crocodile in its turn is attacked by a hunting dog.

From 1615 to 1620 Soutman worked in Rubens's workshop, where he presumably was involved in the creation of the great hunting works. The hunting scenes belong to the most dynamic and monumental works that Rubens made; the representations are full of aggression and physical energy. Expressions betraying horror, fear or bloodthirstiness in the hunters, crazed animals with tusks that wriggle every which way to ward off the attacks, and prancing horses. The scenes are so terrifying that they were found to be almost too violent in Rubens's time. Through this approach Rubens renewed the genre of the hunting scenes. The basis for his compositions he found with grandmasters such as the Italian artist Tempesta.

Soutman knew how to strikingly and perfectly translate the tension, power and monumentality in these hunting scenes. The print is based on a painting by Rubens that was part of a series of four intended for the Duke of Bavaria (Germany) and now hangs in the Pinakothek in Munich (Germany).



33

JUSTUS DANCKERTS
(1635 – 1701)

After
JACOB JORDAENS
(1593 - 1678)

The old folks sing, the young folk chirp

Address: I. Iordaens inuent et pinxit; Justus Danckerts Excudit
Copper engraving, plate edge:32.8 x 43.6 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 18381

Here we see a family concert. A man is playing bagpipes, two young children, one on its mother's lap, are playing the flute. Two old people, a man and a woman, are singing. They are all seated around a laid table. The greyhound is listening with its ears cocked.

In the top of the cartouche a proverb can be read, which roughly means 'The older people set the example, the children follow them'. The old man is probably the painter Adam Van Noort, Jordaens's teacher and father-in-law. The bagpipe player may be Jordaens himself, but that is not certain.

The painting that Jordaens created in 1638 is in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp. The representation was very popular in Flanders until well into the 20TH century.



34

PAULUS PONTIUS
(1603 – 1658)

After
JACOB JORDAENS
(1593 - 1678)

The Bean King or *The King Drinks*

Address: Iac. Iordaens pinxit Cum privilegio Paul. Pontius sculpsit
Copper engraving, plate edge 39.8 x 58.9 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 20066

In a room an ebullient group is celebrating the Biblical feast of Epiphany [Visit of the Magi]. In the centre the 'king', a fat man with a king's crown on his head, is raising his glass. On the right a woman is wiping the bottom of a child, while an old man reaches for her breast. On the left, from its mother's lap, a child is urinating on to a dog standing near the table. A man is being sick.

There are several paintings of this scene by Jordaens, among others in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg (Russia) and in the Royal Museum of Belgium in Brussels (Belgium).

Paulus Pontius made this engraving after a modello (model) that is in the Antwerp Museum of Fine Arts. However, Pontius replaced the Dutch caption by an admonishing text in Latin meaning: 'Nothing is more like a lunatic than a drunkard'. At the bottom of the print it continues: 'Do not entice those who are moderate with wine to drink, for wine has ruined many a person'.



35

PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

PAULUS PONTIUS
(1603 - 1658)

Old woman and a boy with candles

Address: Pet. Paul. Rubenius inuenit et excud. – Cum Privilegiis Regis christianissimi Serenissimæ infantis et ordinam confederat.
Etching, plate edge: 24.6 x 19.9 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room, inventory PK.OP. 16234

Rubens never cut engravings himself. However, he did experiment with the possibilities of etching. There are three etchings that can be ascribed to him, but for further finishing with the burin (a sharp-pointed chisel) he called in the assistance of Paulus Pontius.

This etching may be based on a small painting by Rubens from 1616 that stayed in his collection to the end of his life. The Roman writer Pliny wrote that artists who would depict candle light or torch light were highly respected. He described a work depicting a boy blowing into the fire, in which the reflection of the light is rendered strikingly. It is this scene that Rubens interpreted.

The first version of this etching was completely created by Rubens; there is a copy of it in The British Museum in London (England), but the end result as we see it here came about in cooperation with Paulus Pontius. The fact that Rubens himself acted as publisher of this print shows the great importance he attached to this etching.



36

DAVID TENIERS THE YOUNGER

(1610 - 1690)

A peasant couple dancing
or Village feast, after 1640

Address: Abraham teniers excudit; D. Teniers FEC.
Etching, plate edge 19 x 23 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 17018

David Teniers the Younger personally made no less than 10 etchings. These were always typical genre scenes. The painting or drawing on which this print was based is unknown.

However, we find again various typical figures occurring in Teniers's paintings: the couple on the seat, the bagpipe player, the dancing pair with the little dog in front of their feet, the man being sick, the sleeping man with his head on the barrel, the man with the red beret sticking his head out of the window, etc.

The work of David Teniers was immensely popular, as appears from the enormous mass of 17TH and 18TH-century prints made after his work by engravers from different countries. Abraham Teniers, who also published David's Theatrum Pictorum, was one of them. Abraham made a copy after this engraving, for which he first made a drawing in mirror image, which is now in The British Museum in London (England).



Lucas Van Uden, *Landscape with rainbow (detail)*

LANDSCAPE

As early as the 15th century the northern artists paid great attention to the landscape in the background of what were then mostly religious depictions. After around 1500, these backgrounds were to come increasingly to the fore, to the detriment of the theme. The characters became smaller and smaller and disappeared into the landscape, until they were finally left out altogether, and the landscape as such became the actual subject of the painting. Especially in the beginning such landscape paintings were conceived as 'panorama': they showed the surroundings from a high vantage point. In this way the viewer experienced the sensation that he was as it were was floating over the landscape and could see into an endless distance. Such landscapes are not realistic: they are composed of lakes, forests and mountains, and thus show an ideal vista as a symbolical representation of the entire universe created by God. So although the Biblical subject disappeared, the underlying thought often continued to have a religious hue.

Later on, the landscapes became more realistic: the point of view was set lower, and there was increasing attention for a true-to-life sense of spaciousness. In addition, there was to be more interest in specific types of landscape, such as river landscapes, forest views or sea works. Frequently the scenes were conceived in a more decorative way. The style of landscapes also evolved. In the early 17th century it was mainly the very precisely detailed and carefully composed painting style of Jan I Brueghel that set the tone. Later on Rubens's late landscapes had many followers. With their free brushstroke and atmospheric lyrical nature they often tend to come across as accidental impressions. They were to have great impact on –among others– Lucas Van Uden and David II Teniers.



37

JAN I BRUEGHEL

(1568 – 1625)

River landscape

Oil on copper, 39 x 60 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 910

It is true that Jan Brueghel's *River landscape* gives a good idea of how a port must have looked in the 17TH century. However, the representation is definitely not photographic. Perhaps the small ships should be understood as a reference to the human soul on the unpredictable river of life. According to the conviction of the time, people should show mental courage when life is difficult. If there is prosperity, moderation should be strived for.

Jan I Brueghel was one of the major artists in early 17TH-century Antwerp. He mainly specialised in landscapes and still lifes, which he created so carefully that it gave him the nickname the 'Velvet Brueghel'. His detailed stroke, clear colour palette and jewel-like finish are indeed remarkable. This special effect he achieved by applying the oil paint in thin glazing layers: layer after layer of transparent paint is applied on top of each other. Before a new layer was applied, the previous one had to have dried properly. In this way a very deep and shiny result was created, which was typical for Flemish painting. In addition, Brueghel worked on copper in this case. It allowed for a refined finish. But also from a commercial point of view copper was an interesting medium: unlike wood panels, copper plates were not prone to fluctuations in temperature or humidity. For this reason works on copper were very suitable for export.



38

LUCAS VAN UDEN

(1595 – 1672)

Landscape with rainbow

Oil on canvas, 136 x 201 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 905

Lucas Van Uden's *Landscape* takes the viewer to a beautiful hilly landscape with woods, small streams, meadows and, all the way back on the horizon, a windmill. Trees and haystacks are caressed by the golden evening light. Behind a ridge there is a castle of which only the turrets rise above the trees. In the right foreground three peasant women are walking home. They pass a hunter with a pack of dogs. In spite of all these picturesque details, the sky attracts all attention: a shower of rain is drifting by and a rainbow emerges against the frankly spectacular cloudy sky.

Just like many of his other works, Van Uden's *Landscape* with rainbow was inspired by the dreamy landscapes of Rubens. However, this type of panoramic landscape had a much longer tradition in the Low Countries. A typical feature is the use of colour to create depth: the foreground is built up in brown tones and merges into a ochre centre part. There the green accents of trees and shrubs gain increasingly more ground, to finally flow into the blue colour of the hills.



39

DAVID II TENIERS

(1595 – 1672)

Morning

Oil on panel, 21.4 x 25.7 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 346

This type of landscape on a small scale was in great demand in the 17th and 18th century. It is not surprising since these landscapes have a special charm with their rural and idyllic subjects and spontaneous brushstroke. Thus they capitalise on the trend to a simple rural life, which was to become very popular among the aristocracy and well-to-do burghers. They acquired a house in the country and there enjoyed the outdoors, far from the –even at that time– urban hustle and bustle. Wealthy artists such as Peter Paul Rubens and David II Teniers had such country houses.

Teniers's representations were perhaps more than just idyllic atmospheric pictures. The scene with the fishing in the castle pond, with its cool and blue-grey colours, may probably be considered to be an allegory of the morning. The peasants having a chat on the way home after a day's hard labour in the field should then be seen as a symbolical representation of the evening –this is also indicated by the landscape tinted red-yellow by the setting sun. The presence of the cross at the extreme left of the painting is striking. It indicates that for 17th-century people the entire landscape, but also the times of day, and in fact the entire cosmos was permeated by the divine. (See next page for Teniers' *Evening*)



40

DAVID II TENIERS

(1595 – 1672)

Evening

Oil on panel, 21.1 x 25.7 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 347



41

GYSBRECHT LYTENS

(1586 - 1643/56?)

Winter landscape

Oil on panel, 40 x 51 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 5133

Some travellers have lit a camp fire on an open field at the edge of the wood. With their tunics and turbans they look very exotic. In the foreground some of these gypsies are gathering wood, and there are also some dogs running around. On the right the landscape provides a view in the direction of two somewhat desolate farms. In front of them lies a small frozen lake.

The gypsies were looking for protection under a monumental slanted tree that dominates the entire composition. The branches are so heavily laden with powdery snow that they hang down elegantly and reflect the light. The snow and subdued light also determine the rest of the scene. With the whitish-grey sky and rimed tree bark Gysbrecht Lytens captured the typically Flemish winter atmosphere: the cold can almost be felt. Technically the artist played an ingenious game as well: the white paint lies in small pasty strokes on the copper and thus reflects the light. In this way he enhanced the effect of the grey winter light even more.

Lytens became very popular with this kind of detailed and smooth snow scenes. However, he often had the figures added by another artist: for example he sometimes collaborated with Sebastiaan Vrancx.



42

ABEL GRIMMER
(c. 1570 - c. 1620)

HENDRIK VAN BALEN
(1575 - 1632)

View on Antwerp from the Left Bank

Oil on panel, 37.7 x 44.4 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 817

In 1560 the number of inhabitants in Antwerp reached one hundred thousand. This figure no longer sounds very impressive nowadays, but in the 16TH-century it certainly was. It made Antwerp one of the largest cities in Europe, only surpassed by Paris and a few Italian cities. This large number of inhabitants was due to the fact that Antwerp, located on the River Scheldt, actually was a permanent trade market. The Spanish, English, Portuguese, Italians and Germans were present in great numbers and were zealous traders. Thus in no time Antwerp became the most cosmopolitan metropolis of the early-modern era. Virtually anything a 16TH or 17TH-century individual could imagine could be seen, smelled, tasted and, of course, bought there.

This flourishing port city plays the lead in Abel Grimmer's painting. Behind the farmlands in the foreground lies the bustling River Scheldt. Further back, the metropolis gleams, with the tower of the Our Lady's Cathedral right in the centre. At the top, Hendrik Van Balen added a dramatic cloudy sky, in which God the Father on his throne is surrounded by angels. Jesus Christ and his mother, the Virgin Mary, are kneeling at his feet. Above hovers the Holy Ghost in the form of a white dove. The message in this work cannot be misunderstood: the city of Antwerp was chosen by God and protected by Him.



43

SCHELTE ADAMSZ BOLSWERT
(1586-1650)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

Pastoral Landscape with Rainbow

Address: Petrus P. Rubbens pinxit. S à Bolswert sculpsit. Martinus vanden Enden excudit Antuerpiæ Cum privilegio
Copper engraving, plate edge 33 x 44 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 18048

In the foreground we see a pastoral with a shepherd, playing a shepherd's pipe, and two rural couples. In the background an Italian landscape with a village and a rainbow. For his painting, which now hangs in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg (Russia) and which was the model for this print, Rubens was inspired by graphic art of the Venetian artist Campgnola.

Rubens's landscapes are not realistic or idealising, they are rather visionary. Light phenomena such as rainbows, moonlight or thunder storms and groups of clouds play a large part.

Although we know for certain of one single landscape that Rubens took the initiative to transfer to an engraving, it is clear that Rubens understood how important the art of print-making had been in the past for the development of landscape art of the Low Countries. It may have been his intention to publish a larger series of landscapes, and Bolswert made that dream come true after Rubens's death. This print too stems from the series of the 20 small landscapes.



44

SCHELTE ADAMSZ BOLSWERT
(1586-1650)

After
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(1577 - 1640)

Stormy coast landscape

Address: PP.Rubbens pinxit; S. a Bolswert fecit; Mart. Vanden Ende excudit Cum priuilegio
Copper engraving, plate edge: 30.5 x 42.6 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 18045

A fortified town near the sea is located at the foot of the mountains. A thunder storm breaks. In the left foreground there is a flock of sheep and a man and a woman, fleeing from the storm.
The Latin text under the print is a moralising explanation for the representation of the landscape scourged by the tempest: it is compared to the adversity that is caused by discord among people.

The shepherd on the left calmly looking on stands in his turn for the stoical mentality: that of imperturbable observation.

This print is part of a series of small landscapes, a series of 20 engravings after work by Rubens. The small landscapes that Rubens painted were a private affair: he kept most of them until his death. They greatly influenced on the work of English landscape painters such as Thomas Gainsborough.

Bolswert's print goes back to a painting by Rubens that was in the collection of the Counts of Brühl in Dresden (Germany) in the 18TH century.



45

AEGIDIUS SADELER
(c. 1570 – 1629)

After
ROELANT SAVERY
(1576/1578 - 1639)

A draughtsman seated at a wooden bridge in a mountainous landscape

Address: R. Saverÿ Inuent; Æg: Sadeler excud.
Cu.privil. Sr.C.M. Marco Sadeler excudit
Copper engraving, plate edge 20.3 x 26.3 cm
From the series six mountainous landscapes in Tyrol (Central Europe)
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 16361

In this print the contrast between the dark rocks in the foreground and the light background is immediately noticeable. The figure of the draughtsman with his back turned to the viewer and who may possibly be identified with the artist himself is a rather common element in 19TH-century art from the Southern Low Countries.

Roelant Savery was the younger brother and pupil of the painter Jacob Savery. From 1604 Roelant Savery was in the service of the Roman-German Emperor Rudolph II and in 1612 of his successor Matthias in Prague (at that time the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, now of the Czech Republic), where Sadeler also worked as an engraver and print publisher.

From 1607 Savery was commissioned to depict Tyrol (Central Europe). For this purpose he made studies after nature and thus painted the still jungle-like areas. Unlike Rubens's landscapes, Savery's landscape are realistic and recognisable. However, they are not purely realistic landscapes. For many landscapes he combined his Alpine studies with study drawings he made in the woods of Bohemia. The water and rich depth views are typical of Savery. This series is part of the earliest made in Sadeler's studio after Savery. The first series bears the date of 1609.



46

AEGIDIUS SADELER
(c. 1570 – 1629)

After
ROELANT SAVERY
(1576/1578 - 1639)

Landscape with a round tower in the centre

Copper engraving, plate edge 21,7 x 28,1 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 16586

On the left of the print we see a small river flowing into a big stream. In the background some fishermen in their little boat. The centre of the scene is dominated by a large round dilapidated tower, from which lush vegetation grows.

This print belongs to a series of four so-called Tyrolean (Central Europe) landscapes. It was to be the second series that Sadeler made after landscape paintings by Savery and which were to have been created between 1606 and 1609. This series would then have been made at about the same time as the six Tyrolean landscapes. The same typical elements return here: crags, waterfalls and a distant mountain.



47

RAPHAEL SADELER

(1584 - 1632)

Landscape with a village and a river

Address: Sebast. Vranx inuentor. R. Sadeler iun. Sculpsit.
Copper engraving, plate edge 19.9 x 26.8 cm
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 16432

Sebastiaan Vrancx (1573 - 1647) was, apart from a painter, also an etcher and poet-playwright and in the 17TH century a respected painter of battles. Some of his works were in the possession of Peter Paul Rubens.

His most famous pupil was Pieter Snayers, who followed in the footsteps of his master and specialised in military subjects. Most works by Vrancx show Biblical scenes, genre paintings, allegorical tableaux, war scenes such as the ransacking of towns, and the cavalry.

He frequently painted small formats, landscapes or architectural scenes provided with various figures. He was regularly called on by other painters to add figures to their work. Landscapes generally take up a prominent place in his paintings. This Italianising landscape is not overwhelming, the mountain streams are rather calmly rippling creeks, the trees nicely lined out, the air and clouds anything but threatening. Vrancx's paintings and drawings were very popular and were copied many times in paintings as well as engravings.



48

AEGIDIUS SADELER
(c. 1570 – 1629)

After
PIETER II STEVENS
(c.1567 - after 1624)

Landscape with a village and a river

Address: Marco Sadeler excudit
Copper engraving, 21.4 x 28.2 cm
From the series eight Bohemian landscapes
Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum/Print Room
Inventory PK.OP. 16593

The resting travellers have taken off their heavy luggage before continuing their climb. This print belongs to the series of the eight Bohemian landscapes (Central Europe).

On the various tops of the hills down below we see the typical architecture of the region. The depth effect can be called magnificent. Typical are the effect of depth, the central rocks with the trees, the sun and its rays, the little bridge and the figures in the foreground who play an important part in the composition. He combines the landscapes of the region with more fantastic natural and architectural details.

Little is known about the life of the artist Pieter II Stevens from Mechelen (Belgium). He may have travelled around 1590 to Italy. On 15 April 1594 he was appointed court painter to Emperor Rudolph II. He remained in Prague until 1624, where he must have had contact with the print publishers Sadeler and the painter Savery. Like Savery he painted and drew only landscapes during his sojourn in Prague.



Jan Fijt, *Hunting trophies (detail)*

STILL LIFE

'Still life' is the overarching name for all kinds of paintings depicting inanimate objects, such as foods (mainly fruit and game), plants or flowers, shells or insects. Just like the other genres of painting the still life was generated in a religious context. In religious scenes small corners were decorated with flowers –generally as an attribute of the Virgin Mary or another saint– or with miniature compositions referring to the vanity of human life. As also happened with the landscape, these scenes became a genre in their own right, which soon provided the Flemish with international renown.

The flourishing of the still life went hand in hand with the growing interest in the study of nature, both among collectors and artists themselves. After all, the 17TH century was an era in which botanical gardens and herbaria were created. In addition, of old the aristocracy often had exotic animals in their luxurious gardens, and it is known that a painter such as Jan Brueghel travelled to the capital of Brussels among other things to study animals and plants in the palace garden. But the port city of Antwerp, with its continuous flow of trade goods from all over the known world, also became the dream location for an artist to study rare specimens at first hand.

So here too flowers, plants and animals were sketched with great patience. Subsequently they were combined into a carefully composed scene in the studio. This is the reason why a still life of flowers often shows bouquets of plants that in real life never flower at the same time. Therefore creating still lifes was a highly labour-intense task. The artist had to look for the right specimens, and this might have taken weeks if not months. This resulted in still lifes generally being more expensive than landscapes in the 17TH century. The frequently hyper-realistic expression of material made a still life into a real tour de force.

There are many different types and dimensions of still lifes. Still lifes of flowers were very popular: the flowers referred to the transience of life. Scenes displaying food had a similar religion-inspired message: sensual pleasure is futile, and mankind should focus on eternal life after this life. The dividing line with ornate still lifes is often thin: with their precious and luxurious foodstuffs and ingenious structure such depictions also express the refined life style of the aristocracy and wealthy bourgeoisie. The tactile reflection, the variety and the decorative effect say it all, for transient or not: appearances do matter!



49

GONZALES COQUES
(1614 – 1684)

DANIËL SEGHERS
(1590 – 1661)

Portrait of a man in a garland

Oil on copper, 82.7 x 58 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 803

The finesse and sharpness with which Daniël Seghers knew how to depict especially roses and tulips is unequalled. The arrangement of the flowers was always lively and very varied. According to his contemporaries, Seghers's scenes were so convincing that you could almost smell the flowers in his paintings! This artist was therefore considered to be one of the best painters of flowers of his time.

Seghers mainly specialised in garlands with a figure composition in the centre. Generally it concerns a religious representation of for example the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ or a saint. They were virtually always painted by another artist. Seghers was actually a Jesuit himself, and his paintings were very popular among the brothers of the order; they even distributed Seghers's paintings as 'business gifts' to European rulers. The latter came to visit the artist in his workshop and awarded him golden painter's tools and crucifixes.

The painting exhibited here does not have a religious scene in the centre, but a representation of a man who is unknown now. He was painted by the portrait painter Gonzales Coques. Maybe the combination of the portrait with the flowers had to remind the man of the transience of life. However nice they look, flowers will wilt. But there is hope: the butterfly on the bottom left is the symbol of the human soul, which after death can ascend to God.



50

FRANS SNIJDERS

(1579 – 1657)

Still life

Oil on canvas, 117.5 x 150.1 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 5082

Two rabbits are lying down in the foreground of this painting, with an artichoke in between them. To the left a few snipes and a couple of partridges are resting. This hunting kill is surrounded from the left to the right by a vase with a few tulips and a sprig of columbine, an artichoke, a platter with wild strawberries, a dish with sweets and a few carnations, a basket of grapes, three bunches of asparagus with apples and lemons.

This type of representation is an 'ornate still life' which had to mainly express the wealth of the owner of the work. Abundantly filled tables with hunting kill and exotic fruit were therefore very popular: only those who were rich could afford such luxury.
Although such still lifes are mainly a sight for sore eyes, they often also contained a moral message. Precisely by showing abundance they tried to incite viewers to moderation and virtuousness. By the same token, vegetarianism gained popularity in bourgeois circles of 17TH-century Antwerp. It was believed that Adam and Eve, the first human couple created by God, also only ate vegetables and fruit in the Garden of Eden.

With his solid and accurate drawing, thick and freely applied paint, expressive style of painting and outstanding colour palette Frans Snijders may undoubtedly be considered to be the most prominent painter of still lifes in the 17TH century. He often worked with Rubens and created mainly monumental scenes in an overwhelming and dynamic setting.



51

HIËRONYMUS II FRANCKEN

(1578 - 1623)

A meal for poor people

Oil on panel, 25 x 35 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 934

Among all kinds of kitchenware and foodstuffs there is a red earthenware dish with a herring cut into pieces. In the top right hand corner hangs a print with a caption on which an owl, a pair of spectacles and a candle are depicted. They refer to the Dutch proverb 'what good are candle and glasses, if the owl does not want to see'. In other words, those who refuse to understand something cannot be helped by anybody. So the viewer has to make sure that he is not blind like the owl: he should not desire wealth and luxury. It would be much better to be satisfied with a modest meal and a moderate life: only in that way was his soul to remain clean and pure and be saved after death.

Hiëronymus Francken the Younger was a descendant of a real artists' dynasty. He was the son of the painter Frans Francken the Elder, and the older brother of Frans Francken the Younger. In addition, as a boy he became an apprentice to his uncle, Ambrosius Francken. This did not make Hiëronymus an exception: painter's dynasties occurred often in 16TH and 17TH century in Antwerp. Jan Brueghel the Elder was the son of the famous painter Pieter Brueghel the Elder, and the brother of Pieter Brueghel the Younger. Jan's son and grandson also painted and his daughter Anna married David II Teniers.



52

JAN FIJT

(1611 – 1661)

Hunting trophies

Oil on canvas, 104.5 x 136.5 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 882

A sumptuous still life of game is displayed against a rock, with the large hunting rifle still in the centre. The focus of the painting is a large hare, and in the foreground we see a pheasant, a jay, thrushes, snipes, and various small songbirds. A growling dog is peeking around from behind the rock on the right. He is trying to chase away a weasel, which is creeping stealthily to the hunting kill at the top.

Such still lifes with game were enormously successful in the 17TH century. Fijt left around 200 signed works, a great deal of which consisted of this type of hunting scenes. They were mainly in great demand from the aristocracy and wealthy bourgeoisie who mirrored themselves on the noble life styles of the nobility. The reason was that people who could go hunting had an estate and were more than well-to-do. And even those who could not really go hunting for want of an estate could keep up appearances by means of such a painting. Status is what these scenes were about.

Jan Fijt was an apprentice of Frans Snijders. However, his works are more harmonious and refined. He paid more attention to the contrasts between light and shadow, so that he could emphasise the three-dimensional. Because of the subtle depiction of colour and light Fijt knew how to create a true-to-life evocation of the soft fur of the rabbit or of the feathers of poultry.



53

THEODOOR AENVANCK

(1633 – 1690)

Still life with fruit

Oil on canvas, 63 x 80 cm
Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Inventory 758

On a dark green tablecloth a basket and a dish are placed, both abundantly filled with plums, apricots, a lemon, and especially many, many grapes. The composition was very much thought out: the fruit is displayed in a nice variation of shapes and colours. The whole is a sight for sore eyes and mouth-watering for the viewer. However, the painting is crowned by a vine branch and serves as a resting place for some butterflies. Here too religious symbolism was probably involved: the grapes were a typical symbol of Jesus Christ. They referred to the wine that was served at the Last Supper. The butterflies stood for the soul that, if it resisted worldly luxury, could ascend to heaven.

Aenvanck's care for the light is striking: it is beautifully reflected in the shining grapes, in the flesh of the lemon, or on the dull skin of the apricots and peaches. In this way it contributes to the tactile perception of the depicted fruit. But the light-dark contrast with the background is also remarkable and lends the painting a special theatrical atmosphere.

COLOPHON

Copyright Editor Non Profit Association of the Museums Antwerp, Grand Market 1, 2000 Antwerp-Belgium and all individual authors. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, by print, photoprint, microfilm or any other means without written permission from the copyright-holders.

Maps: © Monsieur Moiré
Image Antwerp at night: © Tourism Antwerp
Image Court of Justice: © Tourism Antwerp
Image Central Station: © Marcel Lennartz
Image Container terminal: © Port of Antwerp
Image City Hall: © Marcel Lennartz
Image The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya: © CSMVS Mumbai
Image Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp: © Kristien Daem
Image Print Office Museum Plantin-Moretus/Printroom: © MPM/PR
All other images: paintings: © Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, Lucas-Art in Flanders
and prints: © Museum Plantin-Moretus/ Printroom Antwerp

General co-ordinator: Luc Denys, Antwerp
English translation: Jopie van Rooy, Antwerp
Graphic design: Monsieur Moiré, Antwerp
Printing: Spenta Multimedia Mumbai

Info:
www.themuseummumbai.com
www.portofantwerp.be
www.kmska.be
www.museumplantinmoretus.be

