

Royal Academy of Arts

Rubens and His Legacy

Van Dyck to Cezanne

Poetry



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Rubens and His Legacy Van Dyck to Cezanne

Main Galleries: 24 January – 10 April 2015

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Main commentary



Descriptive
commentary



50: Rubens, 'The Carters', cat 120



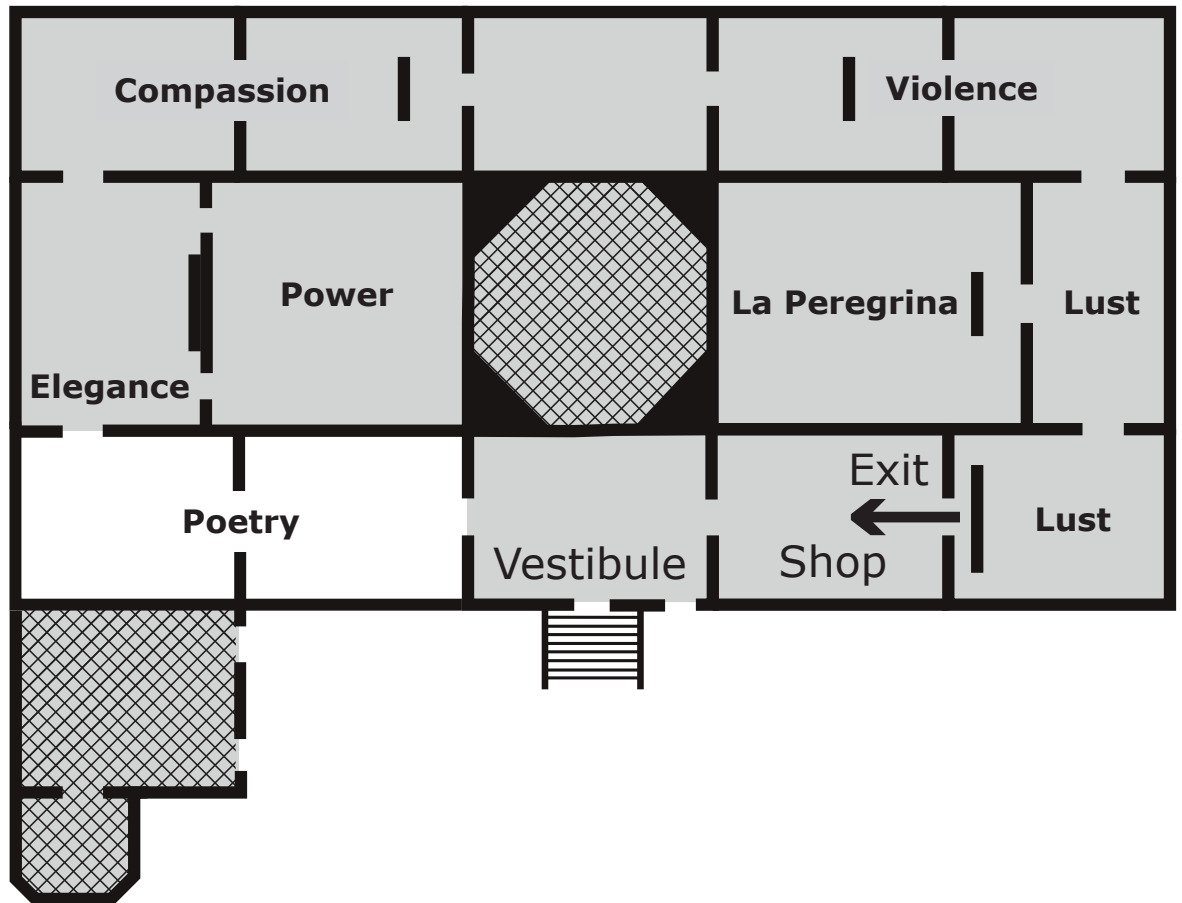
Constable, 'Cottage at East Bergholt',
cat 119



Rubens, 'The Garden of Love', cat 130



Watteau, 'The Pleasures of the Ball',
cat 140



You are in Poetry



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Introduction to the exhibition Rubens and His Legacy

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) has been called “the Homer of painting”. He was above all a storyteller, one might even say a film director **avant la lettre**. His supreme self-assurance is manifest in his dazzling brush strokes.

Paradoxically, he was not only the most inimitable but also the most influential painter of the Low Countries. Four centuries after his death his artistic influence is still felt both in Europe and beyond. Generations of artists have admired and envied his talent.

Rubens has been seen as one of the greatest advocates of the Counter-Reformation and of Absolutism; but this is only one aspect of his achievement. There is also a more informal side to be found in his family portraits, his landscapes and rural idylls, his peasant dances and erotic pastorals.

This is the poetic Rubens who stood at the dawn of the Rococo, Romanticism and even Impressionism: a painter of sensation and sensuality.

The interest that later artists showed in Rubens was frequently selective.

French painters were attracted mainly to his eroticism and poetry, while Germans were enthralled by his vitality and pathos. Spaniards admired the drama of his religious works, while English painters profited most from his elegant portraits and bucolic landscapes.

Many were seduced by Rubens's brilliance of colour, composition or technique, using them as stepping stones for their own artistic development.

In this exhibition Rubens's artistic legacy is divided into six themes: Poetry, Elegance, Power, Compassion, Violence and Lust.

In each, the links between Rubens's works and those of artists who came after are explored. Besides paintings and drawings, the exhibition also includes prints, which were fundamental to the dissemination of his art to an international audience.

If you would like to know more about Rubens and his artistic legacy, join us for free guided tours of the exhibition on Wednesdays at 2.30 pm and Fridays at 7 pm (final week excluded).

Introduction to this gallery

Poetry: Natural Landscapes

In 1635 Rubens purchased a large country estate called Het Steen, near Mechelen in his native Flanders, from which he drew an income (he had already owned land and farms in the area of Antwerp).

Throughout his career he was inspired by the idyllic meadows and orchards on his lands. He studied natural phenomena, including reflections on water, the sky at dawn and at sunset, rain showers and rainbows.

First capturing his impressions in drawings, he later manipulated them on canvas with great conviction. The heartbeat of the seasons can be felt through the picturesque rock landscapes, the tree stumps, the willows and the overgrown trees.

Nature is in turn at its most idyllic, dramatic or poetic.

Shepherds pause to indulge in flute playing and flirtation in 'Landscape with Rainbow', basking in the light that follows the storm. In 'The Carters', a massive outcrop of rock and luxuriant vegetation dwarfs labourers as they struggle to transport their heavy load across difficult terrain.

The last rays of the setting sun in 'Evening Landscape with Timber Wagon' are caught through a group of trees while birds call or circle over fields.

Featuring in British collections from the late eighteenth century and also available as prints, it was Rubens's landscapes in particular that came to exercise an irresistible attraction on British painters.

Thomas Gainsborough, John Constable and even J. M. W. Turner all admired their earthiness and painterly quality, together with the master's ability to elevate nature above commonality.

His example played a significant role in their quest to raise the genre of landscape to new heights of expressive intensity in the era of Romanticism.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

119



John Constable

1776–1837

Cottage at East Bergholt, c. 1833

Oil on canvas

Constable's inclusion of a rainbow in compositions such as 'Cottage at East Bergholt' pays conscious homage to Rubens. The artist gives us the very characteristics he himself praised in the Flemish master's landscapes: "dewy light and freshness, the departing shower, with the exhilaration of the returning sun".

Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool

Ex cat.

Peter Paul Rubens

Landscape with Rainbow, c. 1630

Oil on canvas

'Landscape with Rainbow' is one of several idyllic rural landscapes featuring a spectacular rainbow painted by Rubens in the early 1630s.

In England, they were known at first hand through the version now in the Wallace Collection, which was brought to London from a Genoese collection in 1803 and became a major talking point that year in the art circles of the capital.

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

121

Peter Paul Rubens

Evening Landscape with Timber
Wagon, 1630–1640

Oil on panel

This landscape by Rubens, which evokes the rich, bosky smells of a damp hedgerow in the late summer sun, belonged in the early nineteenth century to the 1st Marquess of Camden.

It held special poignancy for English landscape painters of the Romantic era, who recognised in this intimate work scenery similar to their own.

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 2514

126

Joseph Mallord William Turner

1775–1851

The Forest of Bere, 1808

Oil on canvas

The eloquent handling of the sunset, deep shadows and glowing colours in Turner's 'The Forest of Bere' pay tribute to compositions by Rubens such as 'Evening Landscape with Timber Wagon'.

The opulent, thick application of paint, together with the animated characterisation of the dying tree to the right of the canvas and an interest in depicting local agricultural pursuits, further place the work in close proximity to Rubens's painting.

Tate. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of tax and allocated to the Tate Gallery, 1984. **In situ** at Petworth House

122

Thomas Gainsborough

1727–1788

The Harvest Wagon, 1767

Oil on canvas

Gainsborough may have seen Rubens's 'The Carters', or a copy that was in the collection of Nuneham House, Oxfordshire. He was also almost certainly familiar with the master's 'Evening Landscape with Timber Wagon'.

Both works are recalled here.

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham. The Henry Barber Trust

120



50



Peter Paul Rubens

The Carters, c. 1629

Oil on canvas transferred from panel,

'The Carters' made its appearance in England before 1728, when it was purchased by Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford, who ultimately displayed it at Houghton Hall, his seat in Norfolk. It was probably the best known of Rubens's landscapes in eighteenth-century England.

Here the driver, a rough, georgic figure representing the timeless labours of the countryside, seems oblivious to the chromatic display above his head.

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

123

John Constable

1776–1837

Hampstead Heath, Branch Hill
Pond, 1828

Oil on canvas

In a lecture given in 1833 in Hampstead, Constable expressed his admiration for the animated character Rubens imparted to his landscapes and his ability to capture natural phenomena.

This work bears comparison with the blustery prospect of Rubens's native Brabant; the prominence of the cart may allude to Rubens's 'The Carters'.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Given by John Sheepshanks

124

John Constable

1776–1837

Full-scale sketch for 'The Hay Wain',
c. 1821

Oil on canvas

In this study for his celebrated 'The Hay Wain' (1821, The National Gallery, London), Constable echoes the Rubensian motif of the carters stymied by the forces of nature. The sky, painted with Rubensian energy, indicates the recent passage of a storm that has perhaps caused flooding.

Mankind is not stretched to the limits that Rubens depicts in *The Carters*, but nature still has the upper hand.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Bequeathed by Henry Vaughan

Poetry: The Garden of Love

Around 1635 Rubens painted 'The Garden of Love', a joyous celebration of courtship and love among the wealthy and fashionable citizens of Antwerp in the artist's day.

The canvas reflects the gallant manners and etiquette evoked in contemporary love songs.

Several elegantly dressed couples converse next to a fountain of Venus. Above, cupids with doves gently guide those in love to marriage.

The painting perhaps reflects the happy times Rubens then enjoyed with his younger wife, Hélène Fourment, the daughter of a silk merchant.

The lyrical eroticism embodied in Rubens's 'The Garden of Love' profoundly affected French art of the early eighteenth century. The canvas entered the Spanish royal collection in 1666, but was known in Paris through drawings, prints and painted copies.

It especially bewitched the young Jean-Antoine Watteau. From Rubens's ode to love played among richly attired young people in sumptuous gardens, Watteau elaborated the **fête galante**, a genre that has come to symbolise the seductive elegance of the Rococo.

In the autumn of his life Rubens also painted peasant fairs and frenzied dancing parties, such as in 'A Flemish Kermis' (Musée du Louvre, Paris), some studies for which are exhibited in this room).

These leisure scenes afford a wealth of licentious details and refer back to an earlier Flemish tradition exemplified in the work of Peter Brueghel the Elder.

The lightness of being and the **joie de vivre** of these works were also to be cultivated by Watteau.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

127

Peter Paul Rubens

Château in a Park, c. 1632–1635

Oil on panel

This idyll of genteel amusement in the grounds of a moated castle is a distinctive contribution by Rubens to a Flemish courtly tradition of paintings representing outdoor music, dancing, feasting and flirtation.

It was from such images as this that Jean-Antoine Watteau would develop his **fêtes galantes**.

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie

138.1–2

Peter Paul Rubens and assistant

The Garden of Love, c. 1633–1635

Black chalk, pen and brown ink, probably brush and
grey-green wash and dark brown ink

Keen, perhaps, to acquire widespread recognition for 'The Garden of Love', Rubens reworked it in these two drawings, but with significant changes to the composition. These were in turn elaborated by another hand in preparation for the woodcut by Christoffel Jegher shown alongside.

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv.
58.96.1. Fletcher Fund, 1958

139

Christoffel Jegher (1596–1652/1653)

The Garden of Love, c. 1635

Woodcut

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

136

Peter Paul Rubens

Hagar in the Desert, c. 1630–1632

Oil on panel

The Old Testament tells how Hagar, the Egyptian handmaiden of Sarah, wife of Abraham, was banished to the arid wilderness with her son Ishmael. As she cried for help, an angel appeared and revealed a spring nearby.

The figures of the angel and Ishmael in this painting were subsequently overpainted and the canvas cut down, but particularly striking is the similarity between Hagar and the richly dressed woman in yellow in 'The Garden of Love'.

By Permission of the Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery,
London

141

Jean-Antoine Watteau

1684–1721

Studies of a Seated Woman and a
Detail of Her Head and Shoulders,
c. 1716

Red, black and white chalks on light brown paper

Many of Rubens's preparatory drawings for 'The Garden of Love' were acquired by Pierre Crozat, one of Watteau's principal patrons in Paris. With their proficient use of black and red chalk with white heightening they most likely inspired Watteau's **trois crayons** technique.

Furthermore, the figure is similar in type to Rubens's 'Seated Young Woman with Raised Arms' and 'Hagar in the Desert' (both on show in this gallery).

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

133

Peter Paul Rubens

Young Man Embracing a Young Woman, before 1635

Black and red chalks, with white heightening, on light brown paper

Amsterdam Museum. Bequest of Carel Joseph Fodor

131

Peter Paul Rubens

Seated Young Man, before 1635

Black and red chalks, with white heightening, on light brown paper

Amsterdam Museum. Bequest of Carel Joseph Fodor

132

Peter Paul Rubens

Young Woman Kneeling, before 1635

Black and red chalks, with white heightening, on buff paper

Amsterdam Museum. Bequest of Carel Joseph Fodor

130



Peter Paul Rubens

The Garden of Love, c. 1635

Oil on canvas

In 'The Garden of Love', five amorous couples, encouraged by cupids, gravitate around a group of alluring young women in an idealised garden setting complete with classicising architectural features. Presiding over the scene is a statue of Juno, goddess of marriage, seated on a dolphin.

Rubens executed the painting for his own pleasure in a rich colour palette, having evolved the figures' deportment and fashionable dress in a series of magnificent preparatory drawings, some of which are displayed nearby.

Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

135

Peter Paul Rubens

Seated Young Woman with Raised Arms, c. 1631–1632

Black and red chalks, with white heightening, on light brown paper

Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

134

Peter Paul Rubens

Young Man Descending Stairs, before 1635

Black and red chalks, with white heightening, on light brown paper

Amsterdam Museum. Bequest of Carel Joseph Fodor

137

Jacob Jordaens

1593–1678

'Boating Party', 1630–1635

Watercolour and bodycolour, heightened with white (partially oxidised) over charcoal, on two conjoined sheets of paper

Many elements of Rubens's 'The Garden of Love' are subtly adapted in the 'Boating Party' of his long-time collaborator Jacob Jordaens, probably a design for a tapestry.

A refined company is seen in a garden setting, accompanied by a lutenist. Once again a sculpture presides over the action. The lively interaction of opulently dressed, amorous figures and the couple entering from the right also pay homage to Rubens's invention.

On loan from the British Museum, London

140



Jean-Antoine Watteau

1684–1721

The Pleasures of the Ball, 1715–1717

Oil on canvas

Watteau here portrays high society at play, indulging in the sort of open-air entertainment with music, dance and masquerade then popular in country houses on the wooded outskirts of Paris.

The work owes much to Rubens's 'The Garden of Love', the baroque, courtly solidity of which Watteau transformed with light and fast-moving brushwork into a new artistic genre.

By Permission of the Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

143.2

Peter Paul Rubens

Seventeen studies of dancing peasants for 'A Flemish Kermis', c. 1630–1636

Brown chalk and pen and brown ink (and a few traces of red chalk)

Around the same time as he was working on 'The Garden of Love', Rubens painted 'A Flemish Kermis' (mid-1630s; Musée du Louvre, Paris), a riotous village fete in the tradition of Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

In this remarkable study for the composition, seventeen couples are depicted dancing with unbridled vigour and passion, joined together at the lips, their solid bodies pivoting in motion around this axial point.

On loan from the British Museum, London

145

Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721)

La Surprise, 1718–1719

Oil on panel

Private collection

144

Jean-Antoine Watteau

1684–1721

Couple Dancing, c. 1714

Red chalk on paper

Rubens's 'A Flemish Kermis' was assiduously observed by Watteau after it was brought from Versailles to Paris in 1706.

He borrowed the motif of the dancing couple found in the right middle ground of Rubens's tableau, converting its Dionysian baroque dynamism into the more graceful dance of the **fêtes galantes**.

He also incorporated these figures, with further modifications, into his painting 'La Surprise', giving them a balletic pose.

Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

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Thank you.

Molly Bretton, Access Officer



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Royal Academy of Arts

Rubens and His Legacy

Van Dyck to Cezanne

Elegance



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Rubens and His Legacy Van Dyck to Cezanne

Main Galleries: 24 January – 10 April 2015

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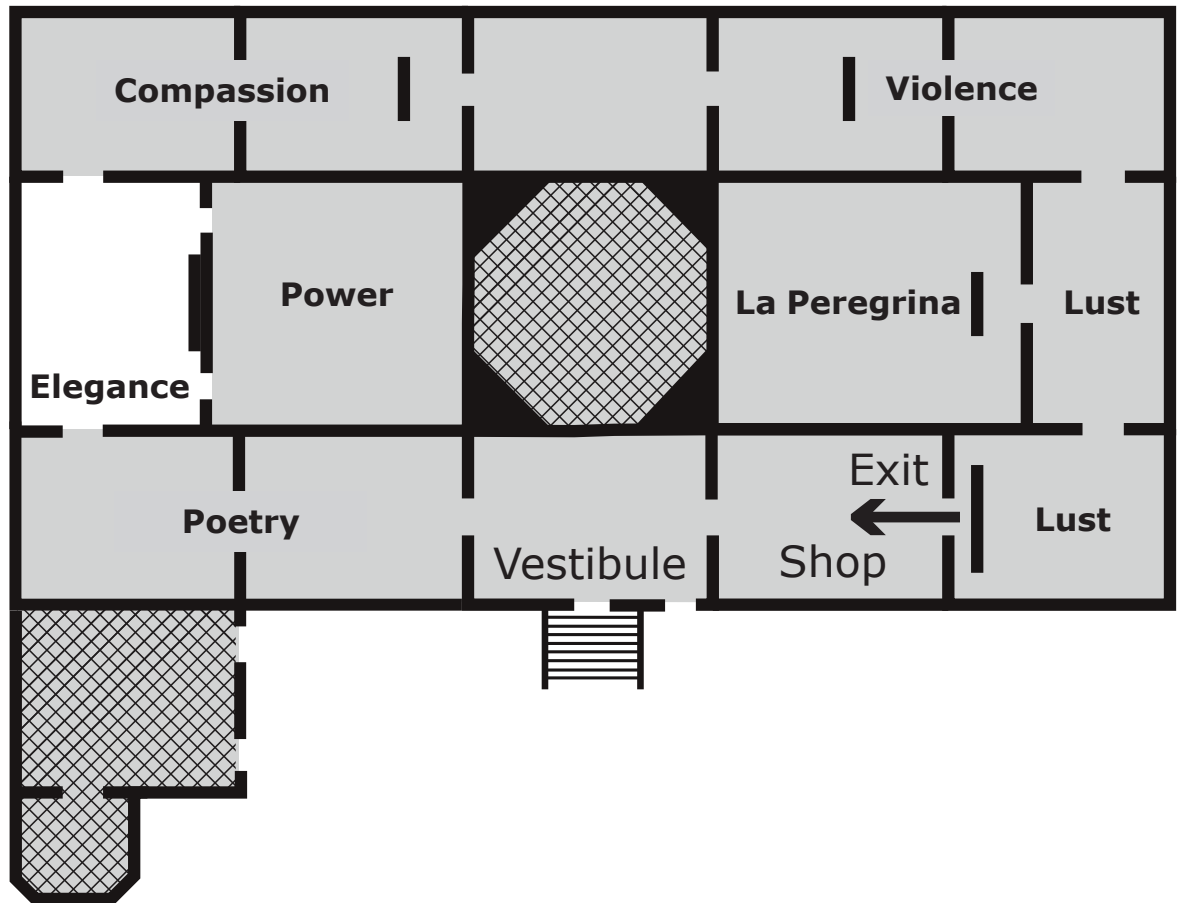
51: Rubens, 'Portrait of Maria
Grimaldi and Dwarf', cat 104



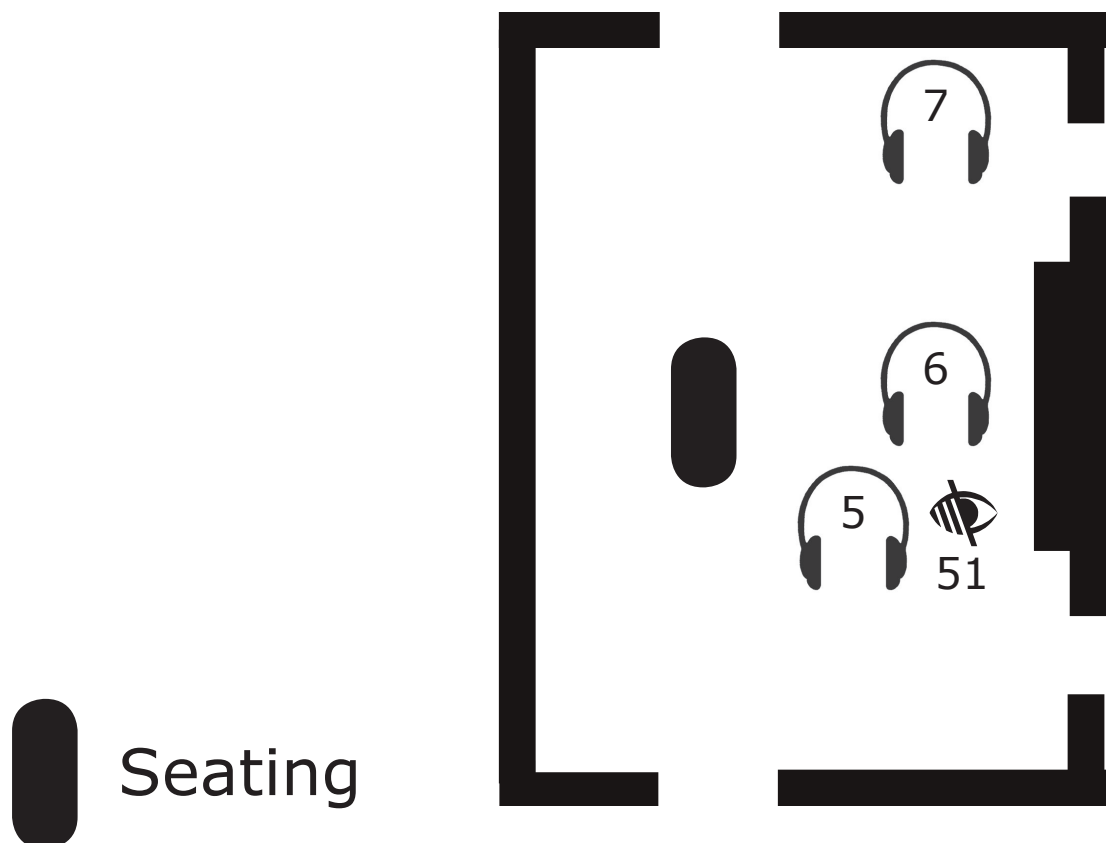
Van Dyck, A Genoese Noblewoman and
Her Son, cat 105



Vigée-Lebrun, Self-portrait in a Straw
Hat, cat 115



You are in Elegance



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Elegance

Rubens was a superlative portraitist.

In Italy, he flattered Genoese high society in life-size portraits. The wives of immensely rich bankers show off in their stunning silks, lace collars, and fabulous jewellery.

This glamour and elegance did not fail to impress the sophisticated Anthony van Dyck, when, after working with Rubens in Antwerp, he visited this port city, then the wealthiest in Italy.

There he followed Rubens's example, creating portraits of a cool and more restrained elegance, his sitters still set in grand palatial surroundings.

Their grandeur, sense of propriety and ownership would later interest artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Thomas Lawrence and Thomas Gainsborough.

The more intimate portraits that Rubens made of his family were snapped up after his death by royalty for their private collections, and became accessible to artists in various European capitals.

Ruben's portrait of his wife, known as 'Le Chapeau de Paille' (The National Gallery, London), inspired Elisabeth-Louise Vigée-Lebrun to paint a charming and informal portrait of herself similarly attired, known as 'Self-portrait in a Straw Hat'. She would go on to influence fashion at the court of Marie-Antoinette with this "shepherdess" style.

In England Rubens's famous painting was again studied by Reynolds and Lawrence, alongside Richard Cosway, all of whom tried to incorporate its informality and the master's warm glow in their own works.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

118

Sir Joshua Reynolds

1723–1792

Elizabeth Lamb, Viscountess
Melbourne, with Her Son, Peniston,
1770–1771

Oil on canvas

The debt of Reynolds to Rubens extended beyond the effect of his portraits.

Here elements from Rubens's 'Virgin and Child with St Elizabeth and the Child Baptist' (c. 1635; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) can be found in Reynold's painting of Elizabeth Lamb and her son, producing a secular mother and child portrait of great intimacy.

Trustees of the Firlie Estate Settlement

111

Sir Joshua Reynolds

1723–1792

**Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and His
Wife, Lady Henrietta, 1769**

Oil on canvas

Sir Joshua Reynolds's commission marks the first marriage of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 4th Baronet, to the immensely rich Lady Henrietta. The happy couple nonchalantly pose in pretty masque costumes.

Aggrandising theatrical props include the ubiquitous red drape and an impressive urn featuring a classical-style frieze. Both cut elegant figures much in the spirit of Rubens and his heir Van Dyck.

Ar fenthyg gan / Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru – National
Museum Wales, Cardiff

112

Sir Thomas Lawrence

1769–1830

‘Portrait of Mrs Arthur Annesley, with Two of Her Children’, begun c. 1790 and left unfinished in the studio at Lawrence’s death

Oil on canvas

As Lawrence matured, his use of oil became closer to that of Rubens’s: he enriched his palette, broadened his brush strokes and increased his control of composition.

This portrait is executed in a Rubensian virtuoso style and blends the stateliness of the Flemish master’s formal likenesses with the domestic charm and tenderness found in his family portraits.

Private collection, c/o Michael Tollemache Fine Art, London

110

Sir Thomas Lawrence

1769–1830

Philadelphia Hannah, 1st Viscountess
Cremorne, 1789

Oil on canvas

This full-length portrait echoes the imposing setting and rich colours of Rubens's 'Portrait Maria Grimaldi and her Dwarf', although the rendition is justifiably more understated.

A newly married Quaker, the Philadelphia-born sitter was the granddaughter of William Penn, an early proponent of the Society of Friends, whose members were noted for their plain dress and sobriety.

Tate. Presented by the Patrons of British Art through the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1988

114

Louis Sailliar

1748–c. 1795

Helena Forman, 1783

Stipple etching

This etching was made after a well-known portrait by Rubens depicting his second wife, the young and beautiful Hélène Fourment, whom he married in 1630.

The painting now belongs to the Museu Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon but in the eighteenth century it hung at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, home of Sir Robert Walpole and the finest collection of pictures in Britain at the time.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

113

Sir Thomas Lawrence

1769–1830

Princess Mary, Duchess of
Gloucester, 1824

Oil on canvas

Aside from her pose and fashion accoutrements, the sophistication and naturalness of Princess Mary, Duchess of Gloucester shows the extent to which Rubens's portrait of Hélène Fourment worked its magic on British artists in the eighteenth century.

It inspired them to create portraits of women from high society that are aristocratic yet appear to make the sitter approachable.

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

109

Richard Cosway

1742–1821

Elizabeth Milbanke, Viscountess
Melbourne, c. 1784

Oil on panel

Cosway, an ardent devotee of Rubens, was like Lawrence clearly affected by the master's portrait of Hélène Fourment (reproduced in Sailliar's etching, which is displayed in this room). Indeed, Viscountess Melbourne's costume and wide-brimmed hat with an ostrich feather are strongly reminiscent of those worn by Hélène, as is the position of her hands, one placed upon the other.

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

115



Elisabeth-Louise Vigée-Lebrun

1755–1842

Self-portrait in a Straw Hat, after
1782

Oil on canvas

Vigée-Lebrun made this portrait of herself soon after viewing Rubens's picture of Susanna Fourment, older sister of Hélène, on a visit to Antwerp in 1781.

Known as the 'Chapeau de Paille' (c. 1622–1625; The National Gallery, London), Rubens's painting heralded the informality of pose and simplicity of costume which became her great contribution to female portraiture.

The National Gallery, London. Bought 1897

105



Sir Anthony van Dyck

1599–1641

A Genoese Noblewoman and Her Son, c. 1626

Oil on canvas

Glamour, colour and movement in Rubens's 'Portrait of Maria Grimaldi and Dwarf' have here been replaced by modesty and an almost austere range of colours. The black outfit of the noblewoman suggests that she is a widow and her son the new head of the family.

In the eighteenth century this painting was exhibited at Warwick Castle, where Sir Joshua Reynolds saw it.

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, inv. 1942.9.91.
Widener Collection

104



51



5

Peter Paul Rubens

Portrait of Maria Grimaldi and
Dwarf, c. 1606

Oil on canvas

The pale complexion of this young woman of the Genoese aristocracy, emphasised by her formidable white ruff, glows and contrasts shrilly with the large, tired head of her servant, accentuating the sitter's beauty.

Kingston Lacy, The Bankes Collection (The National Trust), Dorset

108

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

1732–1806

Young Woman with a Dog,
c. 1769–1779

Oil on canvas

There are compelling resonances between Rubens's 'Portrait of a Woman' displayed in this gallery and Fragonard's 'Young Woman with a Dog', including the three-quarter length and the turn of the head.

But no less mesmerising are the differences.

The Rubens sitter seems to be well off but recognisably of the Flemish bourgeoisie; by contrast Fragonard's model, bedecked in jewellery and dressed in a frilly costume executed with dashing brushstrokes, looks more like a **figure de fantaisie**.

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 37.118. Fletcher Fund, 1937

107

Jean-Antoine Watteau

1684–1721

Head of a Woman, c. 1716–1717

Red and black chalk with stumping on cream paper

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Koenigs Collection, inv. FI 294

106

Peter Paul Rubens

Portrait of a Woman, c. 1625–1630

Oil on panel, four planks chamfered together

The sitter here is thought to be Elizabeth Fourment, one of the sisters of Hélène Fourment, Rubens's second wife.

The painting, which appeared in England in 1818, is of a type that inspired eighteenth-century French artists such as Jean-Antoine Watteau and Jean-Honoré Fragonard.

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Molly Bretton, Access Officer



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Power



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Main Galleries: 24 January – 10 April 2015

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Rubens, 'The Triumph of Henri IV', cat 37



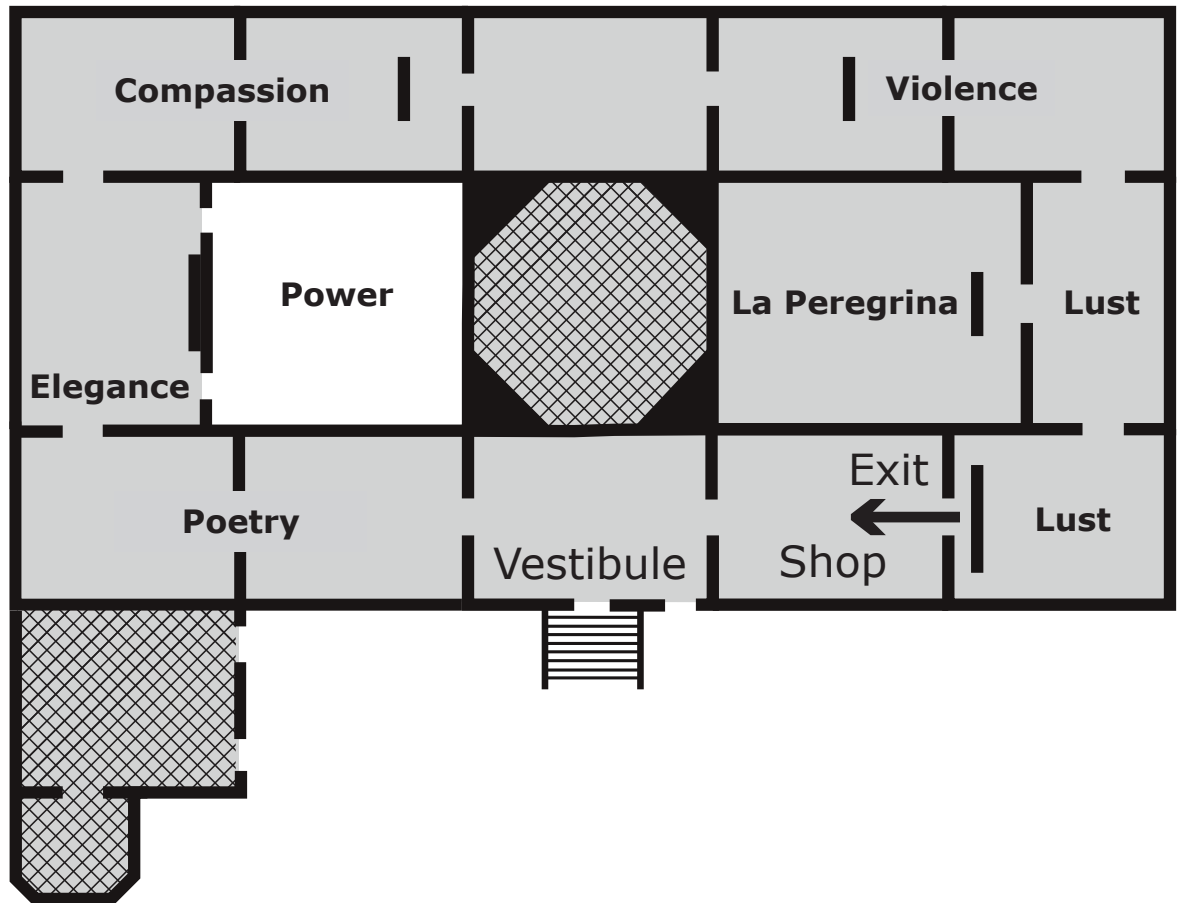
Jordaens, 'Triumph of Frederick Henrik',
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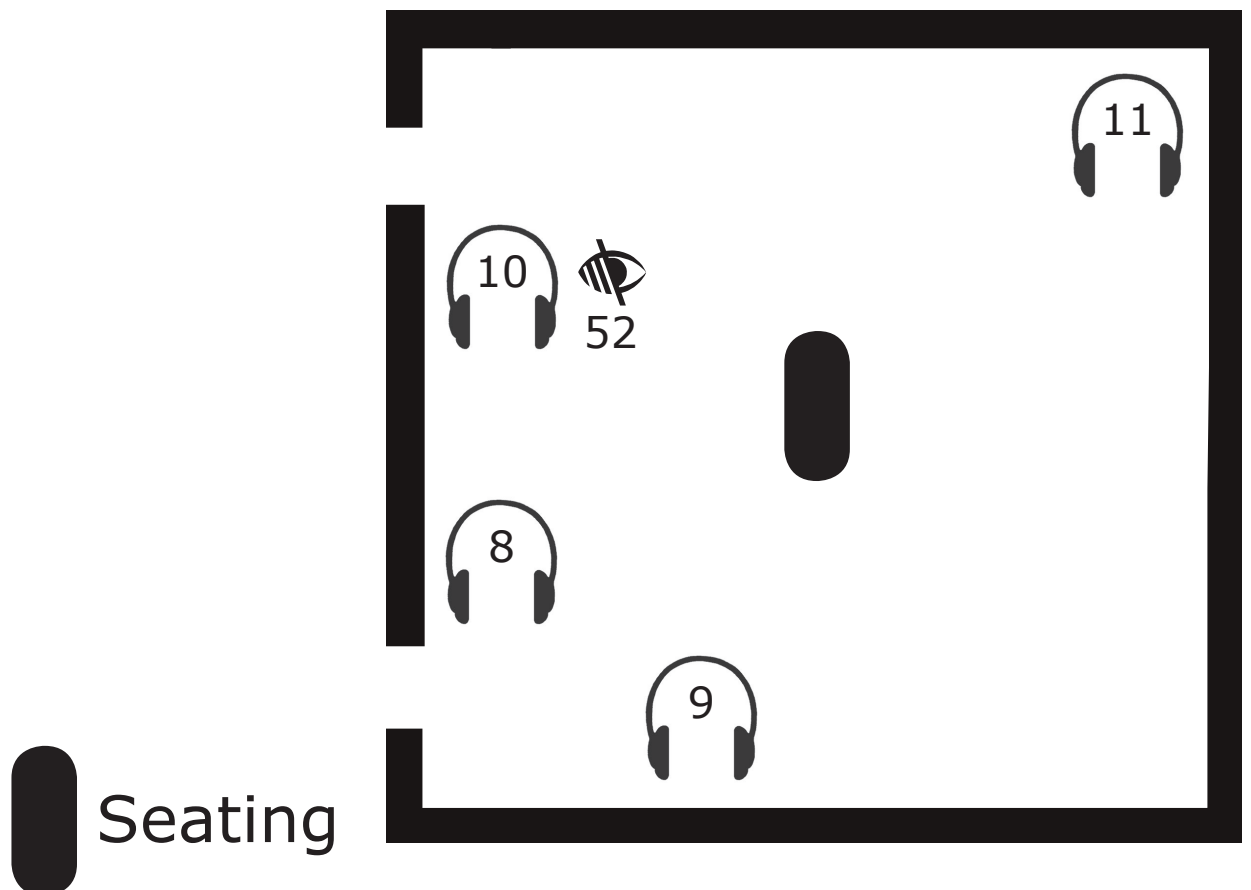
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You are in Power



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Power

Rubens was an unequalled propagandist. He broke away from the tradition of stiff, hieratic representations of the body politic to describe power on the move.

To help personify it he manipulated symbols and allegories with great virtuosity and excelled at the presentation of pomp. His originality also lay in his ability to mix mythology and actuality in his political compositions, in a manner that was both unprecedentedly seamless and dynamic.

As a diplomat moving around princely courts, Rubens certainly committed all his energies to bringing about peace in Europe.

As an artist, he became Europe's leading decorative painter, princes and monarchs competing with one another for his services.

His cycle representing the story of “the most illustrious life and heroic deeds” of Marie de Médicis, Queen of France, counts among his greatest works. The commission was later followed by the magnificent Banqueting House ceiling in Whitehall Palace, painted in commemoration of James I (preliminary sketches can be found in this room).

Rubens also conceived the decorations celebrating the “joyous entry” into Antwerp of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand in 1635 (an element of the decorations was recorded in a print by Theodoor van Thulden).

Subsequent propaganda painters long considered Rubens as a shining example to their trade.

I

Cycle of Marie de Médicis

In 1621 Rubens was invited to paint two series of 24 monumental paintings for Marie de Médicis. The works were to adorn a pair of symmetrical galleries at the Palais du Luxembourg, the new residence she was having built near Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris.

The first gallery was devoted to important events in Marie's turbulent life as a Florentine princess, then as Queen of France and lastly as Queen Mother, all dressed up with allegorical flourishes.

The second gallery, which remained uncompleted, was to pay tribute to the illustrious military career of Marie's late husband, King Henri IV. For this Rubens was instructed to paint triumphal processions in the style of the ancient Romans, honouring Henri's successes on the battlefield.

The commission proved a genuine challenge for Rubens, yet at the same time it was also a triumph.

The cycle inspired absolutist propaganda painting throughout Europe in the seventeenth century: the artist's visual language had a direct impact on the decorations of Huis ten Bosch in The Hague and the Galerie des Glaces in the Palace of Versailles.

Generations of artists would go on to extract the most beautiful details from this catalogue of pictorial motifs.

II

The Banqueting House

King James I approached Rubens in 1621 with a request to decorate the nine oval and rectangular panels in the ceiling of the stateroom in the royal palace at Whitehall known as the Banqueting House.

The artist completed the commission under James's successor, Charles I.

The scheme was designed to celebrate the reign of James I and, under Charles's auspices, the union of England and Scotland after centuries of hostility. The central canvas depicts the apotheosis of James I and is also an allegory of Charles's own birth, alluding to both Stuart monarchs' divine right to rule.

The oval is flanked by the virtues trampling the vices.

In August 1634 the enormous canvases were finally ready and in place. A tour de force in illusionistic painting, the glorifying Whitehall scheme served as an important model for baroque ceiling decorations in Britain, both in public buildings and country houses – examples can be seen in the rooms of Greenwich Hospital, Chatsworth and Moore Park.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

37



Peter Paul Rubens

**Sketch for 'The Triumph of Henri IV',
1630**

Oil on panel

The highlight of the gallery devoted to Henry IV in the Luxembourg Palace, unfinished due to Marie de Médicis's downfall and exile in 1631, was to be the monumental 'Triumph of Henri IV'.

For it Rubens produced at least four preparatory sketches, including this last vigorous example. The king is shown entering Paris in a chariot, crowned by a winged figure in the manner of the triumphs of the Romans.

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 42.187. Rogers Fund, 1942

33

Peter Paul Rubens

Sketch for 'The Coronation of the Queen in Saint-Denis', probably between April/May and October 1622

Oil on oak panel

This swiftly painted work is one of the most powerful and best preserved of Rubens's surviving preparatory oil sketches for the Marie de Médicis cycle.

Executed some ten years after her actual coronation at the Cathedral of Saint-Denis, it depicts the climax of the momentous political event that enshrined her as Queen of France.

The final canvas, now in the Louvre, is 3.94 metres high and 7.27 metres wide.

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg



Peter Paul Rubens

The Apotheosis of James I and other studies, 1628–1630

Oil on panel

Rubens worked out his preliminary ideas for the design of the Whitehall ceiling in this large grisaille sketch. In the centre is the apotheosis of King James I, carried upwards by Jove's eagle, assisted by the figure of Justice, with Minerva (Wisdom) above.

Rubens brilliantly merged the Christian repertoire of the assumption into heaven with the Roman apotheoses revealed by classical reliefs to deify the Stuart monarch.

Tate. Purchased with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Tate Members, The Art Fund in memory of Sir Oliver Millar (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation), Viscount and Viscountess Hampden and Family, Monument Trust, Manny and Brigitta Davidson and the Family, and other donors 2008

44

Peter Paul Rubens

Sketch for 'Prudence (Minerva) Overthrowing Ignorance (or Sedition)', the oval composition occupying the northeast corner of the Banqueting House ceiling, 1632–1633

Originally oil on panel (transferred to a canvas on a composite backing)

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

45

Peter Paul Rubens

Study for 'James I Uniting England and Scotland (James I on His Throne with a Guard)', c. 1632–1633

Oil on panel

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

47

Simon Gribelin the Elder

1661–1733

The Ceiling of the Banqueting House
in Whitehall, 1720

Hand-coloured engraving across three sheets

Royal Academy of Arts, London

43

Attributed to William Etty

1787–1849

Sketch of 'Apotheosis of the Duke of
Buckingham', c. 1825–1835

Oil on panel

York Museums Trust (York Art Gallery)

48

Louis Laguerre (1663–1721)

Sketch for 'The Ascension of Christ
and the Incredulity of St Thomas',
1689–1693

Oil on canvas

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

49

Antonio Verrio (1636/1639–1707)

Sketch for 'The Assembly of the
Gods', c. 1680–1700

Oil on canvas

Tate. Purchased 1967

50

Sir James Thornhill

1675–1734

Sketch for a ceiling painting

'King William III and Queen Mary
Presenting Europe with Peace and
Liberty', c. 1710

Oil on canvas

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

51

Theodoor van Thulden

1606–1669

'The Voyage of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand from Barcelona to Genoa in April 1633, with Neptune Calming the Waves' (known as 'Quos Ego'),
'Pompa introitus Ferdinandi',
Antwerp, 1642

Etching

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

52

Oskar Kokoschka

1886–1980

Loreley, 1942

Oil on canvas



Kokoschka's composition refers with a lot of irony to Rubens's 'Neptune Calming the Waves', represented here by Van Thulden's print but then known to him through the oil sketch in the collection of his patron Count Seilern.

"Britannia no longer rules the waves", the artist explained. "The lack of action has lasted too long. An octopus swims off with a trident, the symbol of maritime power. Queen Victoria [...] sits on a shark, feeding it [...] seamen. The frog in her hand refuses to meet with the same fate: he represents Ireland, where frogs are the only reptiles."

Tate. Presented by Mrs Olda Kokoschka, the artist's widow, in honour of the directorship of Sir Alan Bowness, 1988

36

Attributed to Eugène Delacroix

1798–1863

Sketch after Rubens's composition
in the Galerie Médicis, 'The
Reconciliation of the Queen and Her
Son', 1828

Oil on canvas

Delacroix must have been particularly
attracted to the dramatic figure of Courage
(or Divine Justice) striking with his
thunderbolt the multi-headed hydra symbolic
of dissent and rebellion in Rubens's painting
celebrating the reconciliation of Marie de
Médicis and her son.

Wallraf-Richartz Museum and Fondation Corboud,
Cologne

35

Henri Fantin-Latour

1836–1904

Sketch (after Rubens's composition 'The Presentation of the Portrait' in the Galerie Médicis) for 'Homage to Rubens', c. 1850–1860

Oil on canvas

Fantin-Latour's 'Homage to Rubens' translates in his own style the brilliant colours and brushwork of Rubens's original composition in the seventh painting in the cycle of Marie de Médicis, which shows Henry IV entranced by the portrait of his future bride, brought to him by Hymen, god of marriage.

Southampton City Art Gallery

42

Eugène Delacroix

1798–1863

The Triumph of Apollo (Apollo Vanquishing the Serpent Python) sketch for (or perhaps **ricordo** of) the decoration of the ceiling in the Galerie d'Apollon, Musée du Louvre, Paris, c. 1853

Oil on canvas

Fondation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich

41

Charles Le Brun

1619–1690

Sketch for 'Aurora on Her Chariot', c. 1672

Oil on canvas

Private collection, Paris

40

Charles Le Brun

1619–1690

Sketch for 'The Second Conquest
of the Franche-Comté, 1674',
1679–1684

Oil on canvas

Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de
Trianon

39

Jacob Jordaens

1593–1678

Sketch for 'The Triumph of
Frederick Henry', c. 1650–1651

Oil on canvas



Rubens's rhetoric profoundly influenced Jacob Jordaens, who in the early 1650s participated in the posthumous celebration of the life of the Dutch ruler Frederick Henry (d. 1647) at the royal palace of Huis ten Bosch in The Hague.

His painting depicting the Prince of Orange surrounded by a host of allegorical figures offers recognisable similarities with Rubens's 'The Triumph of Henri IV'.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

38

Theodoor van Thulden

1606–1669

Sketch for 'Allegory of William III Bidding Farewell to His Grandmother, Amalia van Solms, as He Leaves to Enter the Service of the State', 1661

Oil on canvas

On long-term loan to Het Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch. Lent by Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

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Thank you.

Molly Bretton, Access Officer



InTouch  **at the RA**

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Royal Academy of Arts

Rubens and His Legacy

Van Dyck to Cezanne

Compassion



Do not remove from gallery

Rubens and His Legacy Van Dyck to Cezanne

Main Galleries: 24 January – 10 April 2015

Sponsored by



BNY MELLON

Partner of the Royal Academy of Arts

Audio tour



Main commentary



Descriptive
commentary



53: Rubens, 'Christ on the Straw',
cat 91



Delacroix, 'Pietà', cat 92



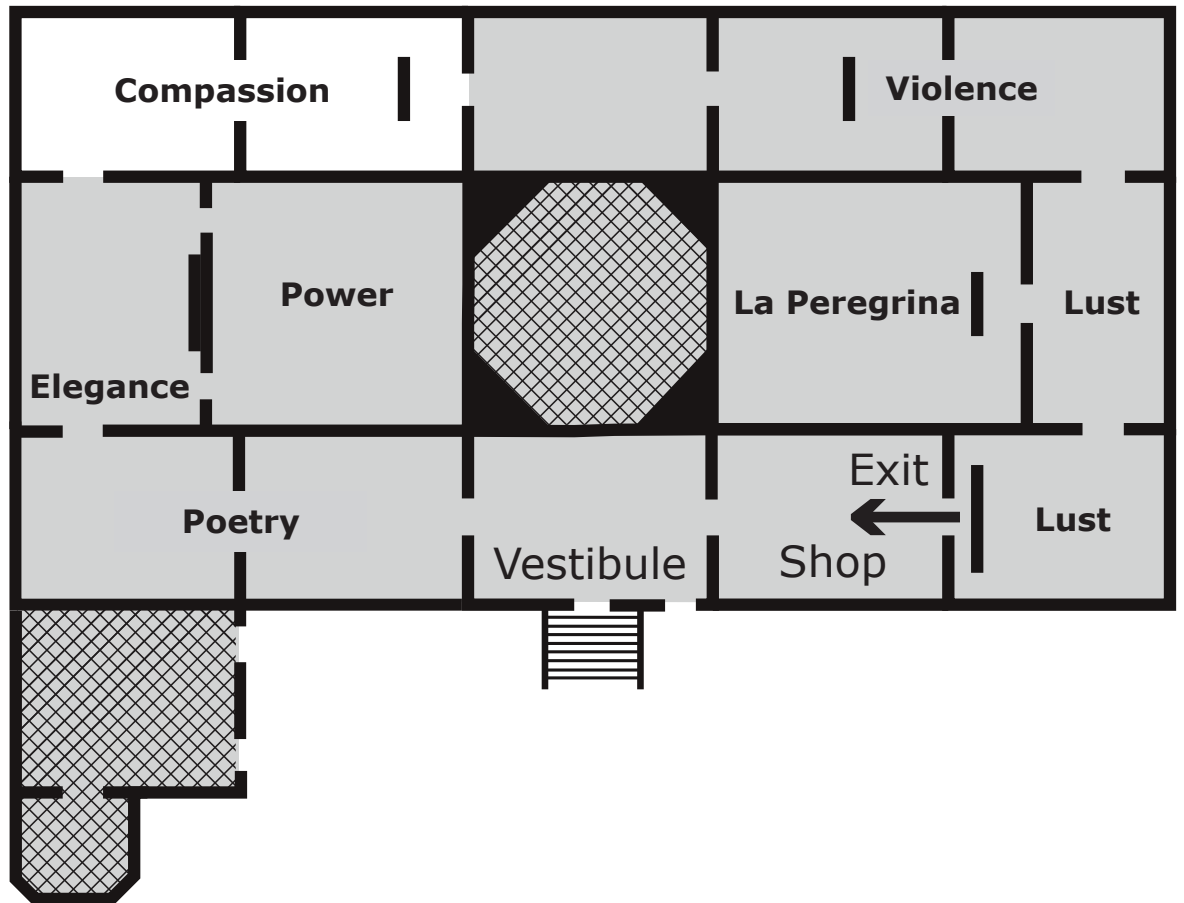
Bolswert, 'Qing Dynasty Plate', cat 83



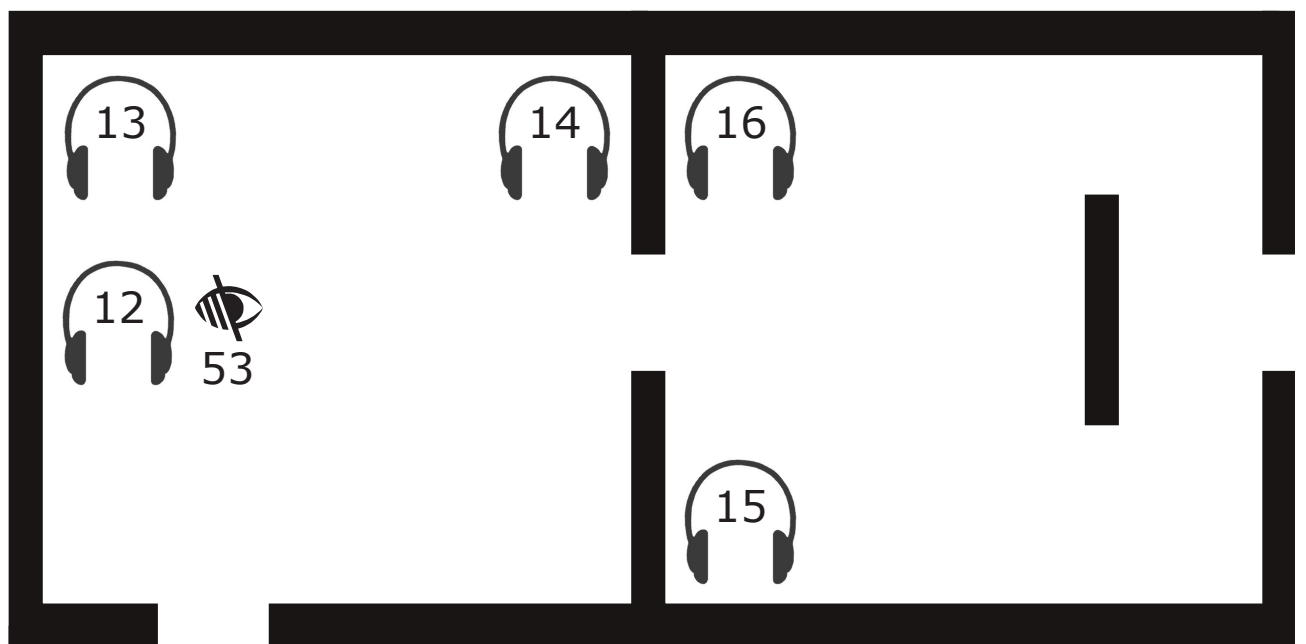
Rubens, 'Saint Cecilia', cat 98



Rubens, 'Tomb and Altarpiece', cat 102



You are in Compassion



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Compassion

In Belgium Rubens is best known as a religious painter, largely because he and his studio produced a stream of countless altarpieces for Flemish and northern French churches from the second decade of the seventeenth century onwards.

These works propounded the dogmas of the Catholic Church. Poignant Passion scenes were designed to inspire emotion in the faithful, to elicit empathy and awaken compassion.

Rubens's religious paintings had a great impact on his Spanish contemporaries, and his compositions were disseminated all over the world through prints. These reproductions proved to be useful teaching aids for missionaries eager to convert the indigenous population in the Spanish colonies.

As a result Rubens's pictorial inventions could be found in the most remote villages of both the Americas and Asia (even at second hand, for example in the case of the Qing dynasty porcelain plate in this room).

Many of Rubens's largest altarpieces were exhibited in Paris between 1794 and 1815 as trophies of war, looted by Napoleon's armies from the communities for which they were made.

By placing what had been designed as objects of veneration in the Louvre they were elevated to the status of fine art. These often-gigantic works inspired many Romantic painters to express themselves in an equally emotive style.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

91



53



12

Peter Paul Rubens

Christ on the Straw, 1617–1618

Oil on panel

This is perhaps Rubens's most poignant depiction of the Lamentation. Quietly emotive, the central panel depicts the moment when Christ's body was carried onto a stone block to be washed and anointed before burial.

The triptych was commissioned as an epitaph by Maria Maes after the death in 1617 of her husband, the Antwerp merchant Jan Michielsens.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

Eugène Delacroix

1798–1863

Pietà, c. 1850

Oil on canvas

Delacroix retained here only Rubens's figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary from his 'Christ on the Straw', which he freely interpreted and placed in a different setting.

Van Gogh gave a vivid description of the work, noting its emotional force, in a letter to his sister Wilhelmina written from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in the autumn of 1889. He later painted two copies of it based on a lithograph after Delacroix's work.

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design,
Oslo

103

Peter Paul Rubens and workshop

St Teresa of Ávila Interceding
for Bernardino de Mendoza in
Purgatory, 1630–1635

Oil on canvas

In a letter dated 14 December 1885 to his brother Theo, Vincent van Gogh reported from Antwerp that Rubens had made a strong impression on him. He found his draughtsmanship “phenomenal” and particularly admired the way Rubens drew heads, adding streaks of red in the face and rendering them “so alive”.

“I look for fragments, such as those blonde heads in St Theresa in Purgatory. I’m also looking for a blonde model just because of Rubens.”

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

86

Sir Edwin Landseer

1802–1873

Christ on the Cross, 1840

Black, red and white chalks on blue-grey paper

Landseer took a trip along the Rhine in 1840 that included a stop in Belgium, where he made this copy of the head and torso of Christ in Rubens's 'Coup de Lance'.

Drawn softly and primarily in white chalk with some heightening, the Redeemer emerges from the blue-grey paper like a ghostly vision.

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

85

Eugène Delacroix

1798–1863

Sketch for 'Crucifixion', 1846

Oil on panel

Delacroix saw Rubens's 'Coup de Lance' (c. 1620) in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp in August 1850. He judged it of "his finest period" and noted Rubens's brilliant use of colour, light and shade. In this dazzling oil sketch he singled out the figure of Christ, who radiates light in dramatic contrast with the dark, stormy sky.

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 2625

84

Boetius Adamsz.

Bolswert

c. 1580–1633

Coup de Lance, 1631

Engraving

In 1620 Rubens painted a 'Crucifixion' for the high altar of the Franciscan Church of the Minor Friars in Antwerp. One of his boldest compositions, it depicts the moment when one of Pilate's soldiers pierces Christ's side with his spear in order to hasten his death.

The monumental canvas (now in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp) attracted praise for centuries to come and became widely known through Bolswert's splendid engraving.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

Unknown Artist, Qing Dynasty

Porcelain dish with illustration after 'Coup de Lance', c. 1720–1730

Porcelain

Bolswert's print after Rubens's 'Coup de Lance' was disseminated as far away as China, probably travelling with the Catholic missionaries who established themselves there for a short period.

There, in around 1720–1730 and during the reign of Kangxi, fourth emperor of the Qing Dynasty, it was quaintly replicated by a local painter on a dish made in Jingdezhen, China's porcelain capital.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

89

Eugène Delacroix

1798–1863

Sketch after 'Descent from the Cross', c. 1838

Pen and brown ink on paper

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Koenigs Collection, inv. F II 84

90

Thomas Gainsborough

1727–1788

Sketch after Descent from the Cross

1766–1769

Oil on canvas

Gainsborough's rendition in reverse of Rubens's Antwerp Crucifixion, known in England and likely to Gainsborough himself through the master's painted sketch then on display at Cosham Court, suggests that he was in fact following Vorsterman's print.

Unfinished, this work bears all the hallmarks of an exercise in composition.

Gainsborough's House, Sudbury

88

Jan Joris van Vliet

c. 1610–c. 1635) and

Rembrandt van Rijn

1606–1669

Descent from the Cross, 1633

Etching

In the early 1630s Rembrandt was asked to produce a series of scenes of the life of Christ for Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange.

The artist, who never left Holland, evidently turned in his younger years to Rubens via Vorsterman's print for his Crucifixion, but avoided its heroic pathos in favour of an equally moving but more realistic image better suited to quiet Protestant contemplation.

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Mr and Mrs De Bruijn-van der Leeuw Bequest, Muri

87

Lucas Vorsterman the Elder

1595–1675

Descent from the Cross, 1620

Engraving

Rubens's 'Descent from the Cross' can still be admired today in Antwerp's cathedral, for which it was painted in 1611. Its spectacular centrepiece was seen by artists across Europe thanks to Lucas Vorsterman's print.

Renowned for his ability to render fine tone and subtle transitions between light and shadow, the engraver mustered all his skill to reproduce Rubens's virtuoso composition.

On loan from the British Museum, London

102



David Wilkie

1837–1887

Rubens's Tomb and Altarpiece
in the Sint-Jacobskerk in Antwerp,
c. 1816

Watercolour and graphite on buff paper

On loan from the British Museum, London

101

Sir Joshua Reynolds

1723–1792

Etching by Rombout Eynhoudts
(1614–1679/1680)

'Sacra Conversazione with St
Bonaventura and St George',
retouched c. 1781

Red chalk and brown wash over counterproof of etching

(continued over)

Reynolds analysed Rubens's 'Madonna and Child with Saints' during his visit to Antwerp in 1781, commenting that the painting was "as bright as if the sun shone on it" and "well worth the studying [...] to a painter who wishes to become a colourist, or learn the art of producing a brilliant effect".

He duly annotated and retouched the counterproof of Rombout Eynhoudts's etching after the work.

On loan from the British Museum, London

100

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

1732–1806

Virgin and Child with Saints, 1761

Black chalk on paper

A few years before his death in 1640 Rubens painted a 'Madonna and Child with Saints' to adorn his own tomb in the church of St James in Antwerp. The work was later placed above the altar in his funerary chapel, where it remains to this day.

In the eighteenth century the painting, one of Rubens's most lyrical, could also be viewed in the form of a studio copy at the Palazzo Balbi in Genoa. This is where Fragonard, who was then working for the art lover Abbé de Saint-Non, saw it and reproduced it in black chalk, capturing its tenderness while softening its realism.

On loan from the British Museum, London. Presented by Mrs Spencer Whatley, 1936

94

Joachim von Sandrart the Elder

1606–1688

**Enthroned Virgin and Child Adored
by Saints, c. 1665–1675**

Red chalk on paper

A couple of decades after he escorted Rubens on an artistic voyage through Holland, the German painter and art historian Joachim von Sandrart visited Antwerp.

This warm red chalk drawing is based both on Titian's 'Pesaro Madonna' (1519–1526, Frari Basilica, Venice) and Rubens's 'Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints' (1628, Church of Saint Augustine, Antwerp), although the figures are somewhat more classically arranged than those in the Antwerp altarpiece.

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 2005.491. Van Day Truex Fund, 2005

93

Peter Paul Rubens

Sketch for 'Virgin and Child
Enthroned with Saints', c. 1628

Oil on panel

Rubens's 'Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints' is widely recognised as one of his finest non-narrative religious scenes. Commissioned by Antwerp's Augustinian friars for their cathedral church dedicated to Our Lady and All the Saints, the monumental canvas, of which this is the closest sketch, was installed in 1628.

Most impressive are the great sweep of the composition and the figures' seamless sequence of varied and beautiful attitudes.

Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

95

Claudio Coello

1642–1693

Virgin and Child Adored by St Louis,
King of France, 1665–1668

Oil on canvas

In 1665 the collection of Philip IV of Spain contained Rubens's copy of his painting 'Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints' (c. 1630, Museo del Prado, Madrid), a copy that seems to have informed this work by Coello, made for Don Luis Faurés, a member of the personal guard of the Queen of Spain.

Coello borrowed and adapted key motifs from Rubens's composition, as well as his sumptuous range of saturated golds, reds and blues mixed with cooler colours, giving the composition a markedly northern feel.

Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

96

Schelte Adamsz.

Bolswert

c. 1586–1659)

Conversion of St Paul, 1650–1670

Engraving

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

97

Bartolomé Esteban

Murillo

1617–1682

Conversion of St Paul, 1675–1682

Oil on canvas

Bolswert's splendid engraving after Rubens's last painting of the conversion of St Paul (destroyed in 1945) was available throughout Europe. In Spain its dramatic conception inspired Murillo's own 'Conversion of St Paul'.

Murillo has, however, tempered its baroque exuberance; the whole is executed in the artist's signature soft style.

Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

99

Gustav Klimt

1862–1918

St Cecilia, 1885

Oil on canvas

Rubens's oil sketch of St Cecilia was donated to the Vienna Akademie in 1821, and clearly later served as a model for Gustav Klimt.

The artist had just graduated from what is now the school of applied arts in Vienna when he undertook to paint three ceiling frescoes for the municipal theatre in Fiume (today Rijeka in Croatia). Among them was an allegory of music, also known as 'St Cecilia'.

Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

98



Peter Paul Rubens

St Cecilia, 1620

Oil on panel

Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna

This delightful work is one of the very few surviving oil sketches Rubens made in preparation for his monumental cycle of paintings for the ceiling compartments in the aisle galleries of Antwerp's Jesuit church (destroyed in 1718).

The lower level depicted 16 saints, including Saint Cecilia, whom Rubens portrayed seated on a cloud, playing an organ powered by a lively putto. The patron saint of music looks heavenwards for divine inspiration while an angel holds a crown of flowers over her head, alluding to her martyrdom.

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Molly Bretton, Access Officer



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Royal Academy of Arts

Rubens and His Legacy

Van Dyck to Cezanne

Violence



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Rubens and His Legacy Van Dyck to Cezanne

Main Galleries: 24 January – 10 April 2015

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Main commentary



Descriptive
commentary



Attributed to Rubens, 'The Fall of the Damned', cat 24



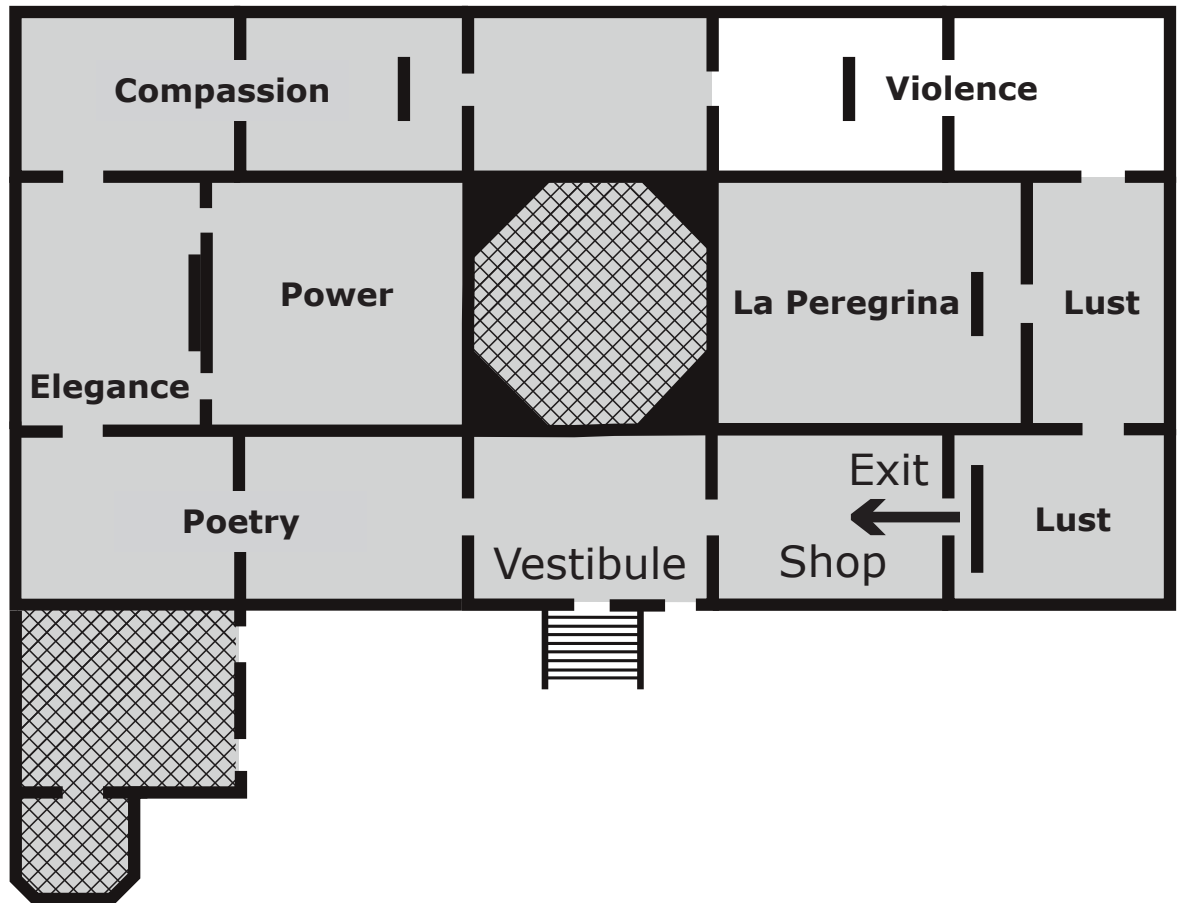
Boeckhorst, 'The Fall of the Damned', cat 23



54: Rubens, 'Tiger, Lion and Leopard Hunt', cat 1



Delacroix, 'Lion Hunt', cat 14



You are in Violence



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Violence

Few Old Masters succeeded in evoking belligerence, aggression, horror and atrocity more convincingly than Rubens.

Much like a contemporary filmmaker today, Rubens was a master of special effects. In the studies and prints depicting his conception of the Last Judgement we are sucked into a dizzying whirlwind of bodies in free fall, damned souls suffering divine retribution.

The fear of being thrown into the eternal fire is etched onto their faces.

In Greek and Roman mythology the abduction of women is a recurrent theme, and one which occurs regularly in Rubens's œuvre.

His compositions are ambiguous: are these women victims of brutal assaults, or perhaps themselves overpowered by passion? Did Rubens consciously mitigate the violence through a filter of love?

Whatever the answer, he returned time and again to the tension between rampaging riders and struggling women.

The gruesome details in Rubens's hunting scenes remain spine-chilling even to a modern audience. The cruelty of predators and the life-and-death struggles of warriors fascinated him.

Such subjects enabled him to paint bodies in motion and portray the raw emotions expressed on the protagonists' faces.

Rubens's violent depictions exerted a considerable influence on a wide range of artists.

His scenes of souls approaching hell not only impressed his contemporaries but also served as a basis for the dramatic secular decorations of later painters.

Abduction made a comeback as an artistic subject in the age of Romanticism, and in their search for usable material artists inevitably came across Rubens's portrayals of this theme.

His hunting scenes aroused the enthusiasm of the Romantic British painters while artists such as Delacroix appreciated them for their exoticism.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

26

Jonas Suyderhoef

c.1613–1686

The Fall of the Damned, 1642

Engraving

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

24



**Attributed to Peter Paul
Rubens**

Sheet of studies for two groups in
the upper half of 'The Fall of the
Damned', c. 1614–1618

Black and red chalk, watercolour and body colour, on two
sheets conjoined

This detailed chalk drawing is a partial copy of Rubens's monumental canvas representing 'The Fall of the Damned' (1620, Alte Pinakothek, Munich), commissioned by the Bishop of Antwerp, Marius Ambrosius Capello.

It shows the central group of corpulent gluttons tormented by demons, their modelling worked up in watercolour and body colour with virtuoso skill.

On loan from the British Museum, London. From the bequest of Richard Payne Knight, 1824

Jan Boeckhorst (1604–1668)

The Fall of the Damned, 1639–1653

Oil on panel

This painting is a replica – greatly reduced in size – of Rubens's 'Fall of the Damned' (1620; Alte Pinakothek, Munich) by Jan Boeckhorst, a former assistant of the master. The figures are, however, more slender, the fall of light has been altered and the palette is more vivid than that of the original.

On long-term loan to Suermondt-Ludwig Museum, Aachen. Lent by a private collection

25

Pieter Claesz. Soutman

c. 1580–1657

The Fall of the Damned, 1641

Etching and drypoint in two plates

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

22

Peter Paul Rubens

Sketch for 'The Abduction of Proserpine', c. 1614–1615

Oil on panel

Rubens's portrayal of the mythological rape of Proserpine was inspired by a classical poem composed by Claudian.

Venus asks Proserpine to pick flowers in a meadow, but Pallas Athena and Diana are infuriated when they realise that this is a trap set by Pluto to have the girl abducted. Athena raises her shield, decorated with the dreaded head of Gorgon; Diana restrains her and prevents her from throwing a lance at Pluto.

Musée du Petit Palais, Paris

21

Peter Paul Rubens

Sketch for 'The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus',
c. 1610–1611

Oil on panel

Rubens often chose to combine violence and lust, since the portrayal of these human passions resulted in dynamic and exciting compositions that capitalised on his patrons' taste.

(continued over)

Mythological stories usually provided an excuse for painting voluptuous female nudes.

The rape of the daughters of Leucippus by the unruly brothers Castor and Pollux is a powerful example. The vehemence and swiftness of Rubens's brush strokes accentuates the intensity of the scene.

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design,
Oslo

18

Théodore Géricault

1791–1824

Five Sketches for a Cavalry Battle,
c. 1813–1814

Pen and brown ink with brush over graphite on paper

Géricault studied the work of Rubens in the early years of his short career and borrowed mainly the master's clever and tumultuous compositions.

There is abundant evidence of his interest in Rubens's equestrian scenes with their rearing horses and splendidly attired cavalrymen, such as in 'The Defeat of Sennacherib'.

The Art Institute of Chicago

19

Antoine Joseph Wiertz

1806–1865

Study for 'The Greeks and the Trojans Fighting Over the Body of Patroclus', 1837

Oil on panel

Antoine Joseph Wiertz began his training in 1820 at the Royal Academy of Antwerp, where he discovered Rubens's masterpieces. Seized by artistic overconfidence he went on to make monumental history paintings full of heroism and bravura such as 'The Greeks and the Trojans Fighting over the Body of Patroclus', of which this is a preparatory oil study.

In using a complex diagonal composition, Wiertz was attempting to rival Rubens's animated battle scenes.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

28

Hans Makart

1840–1884

Study for 'The Victory of Light Over Darkness', 1883

Oil on canvas

The celebrated Viennese painter Makart fell back on formulas earlier developed by Rubens when he was commissioned to decorate the ceiling above the staircase in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in the Austrian capital.

In his apotheosis of art (the victory of light over darkness) we see, in the middle, Apollo riding his sun-chariot; close to him hover Luna and Amor. Below them, Vices flee into the darkness, while several Virtues frolic in the clouds at the right.

Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

29

Hans Canon

1829–1885

Design for 'The Cycle of Life', c. 1885

Oil on canvas

Canon's preparatory design for the domed ceiling above the staircase in the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna is a secularised version of Rubens's 'Great Last Judgement' (1617; Alte Pinakothek, Munich).

Rubens's supreme figure of Christ has been replaced by a contemplative Father Time, lower down in the painting, who is apparently indifferent to the medley of Rubensian motifs woven into a decorative ring behind him.

Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna

30

Lovis Corinth

1858–1925

Hell (fragment), c. 1901

Oil on canvas

Corinth's memories of Rubens's masterpieces in the Alte Pinakothek Munich and the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp stayed with him: his palette became more colourful and his brushwork freer.

In 1901 he painted 'Hell', which refers to Rubens's 'The Fall of the Damned' (1620; Alte Pinakothek, Munich) but he was dissatisfied with the painting and kept only this fragment.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. Long Loan in 1997

27

Charles Le Brun

1619–1690

The Fall of the Rebel Angels, 1685

Oil on canvas

When he imagined the decoration of the chapel in the palace at Versailles, Charles Le Brun, court painter to Louis XIV, turned to Rubens's *The Fall of the Damned* (1620; Alte Pinakothek, Munich). His original preliminary drawing for the ceiling makes it look as though a chaos of damned souls are plunging into the room.

The untimely death of his patron Jean-Baptiste Colbert obliged Le Brun to produce this painting as a teaser for his successor. However, it was not accepted and the project foundered.

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon

20

Arnold Böcklin

1827–1901

The Battle on the Bridge, 1892

Canvas affixed to panel

This painting by Böcklin relocates the hostile encounter of Rubens's 'The Battle of the Amazons' (1617–1618; Alte Pinakothek, Munich) on a log bridge.

A horde of naked blonde men on horseback tears into a group of warriors in battle gear, and in the foreground several warriors wade through the water to surprise their opponents' flank.

On loan to Kunsthaus Zürich. Lent by a private collection

12

Eugène Delacroix

1798–1863

Landscape with a Boar Hunt, 1839

Oil on paper, glued on canvas

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a studio copy of Rubens's 'Landscape with a Boar Hunt' (1617–1620; Glasgow Museums) was held in the renowned collection of King William II of the Netherlands in The Hague.

It was there that Delacroix saw it in September 1839 and resolved to paint this scaled-down copy.

Neue Pinakothek, Munich. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen

16

James Ward

1769–1859

Bulls Fighting, with a View of St
Donatt's Castle, Glamorganshire,
1803

Oil on panel

Rubens's masterly 'A View of Het Steen in the Early Morning' (c. 1636; The National Gallery, London) made a deep impression on the animal painter James Ward.

He chose a panel of similar dimensions with a smooth surface, on which he could demonstrate his complete mastery of Rubens's transparency and brushwork. Ward borrowed the motif of the fighting bulls from George Stubbs.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

14



Eugène Delacroix

1798–1863

Lion Hunt, 1858

Oil on canvas

Delacroix's depictions of hunts are generally set in the in the dusty Atlas Mountains. While they exude the Orientalism already found in Rubens's hunting scenes, the artist had also been fascinated by the prowess of the local horsemen during a journey to Morocco in 1832.

Through his use of bright and muted colours, and purposefully blurred contours, Delacroix created a sense of coherence, depth and speed that owed much to his study of the work of Rubens.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. S. A. Denio Collection –
Sylvanus Adams Denio Fund and General Income

15

Sir Edwin Landseer

1802–1873

The Hunting of Chevy Chase,
c. 1825–1826

Oil on canvas

This hunting scene, based on a medieval ballad, is Landseer's response to Rubens's 'Wolf and Fox Hunt' (c. 1616; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

The horn blower is even a direct quote from Rubens's work.

The bright colours are also quite similar to the palette of the Flemish master in the years before 1620.

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

Peter Paul Rubens

Tiger, Lion and Leopard Hunt,
c. 1617

Oil on canvas

Rubens's impressive 'Tiger, Lion and Leopard Hunt' is a perfect example of a dynamic composition with a diagonal thrust.

The oriental and helmeted warriors follow the movement of the rearing horse and the tiger.

Rubens's brush brought the predators to life, with the help of a tiger skin, a lion skin and his tremendous knowledge of anatomy.

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes

4

Christoffel Jegher

1596–1652/1653

Hercules Crushing Discord,
c. 1633–1634

Woodcut

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

3

Peter Paul Rubens

Sketches for 'The Labours of
Hercules: Hercules Wrestles with
Antaeus and three sketches of
Hercules', c. 1630–1635

Red and black chalk with pen and brown ink

On loan from the British Museum, London. Presented by
Henry Vaughan, 1897

2

Peter Paul Rubens

Sketch for 'Lion Hunt', c. 1621

Oil on panel

Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Bayerische
Staatsgemäldesammlungen

10

Pieter Claesz. Soutman

c. 1580–1657

Hippopotamus and Crocodile Hunt,
after 1636

Etching

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

8

Pieter Claesz. Soutman

c.1580–1657

Boar Hunt, 1642

Etching

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

9

Jonas Suyderhoef

c.1613–1686

Lion and Leopard Hunt, after 1636

Engraving

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

7

Pieter Claesz. Soutman

c.1580–1657

Wolf Hunt, after 1636

Etching

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

6

Pieter Claesz. Soutman

c.1580–1657

Lion Hunt, after 1636

Etching

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

5

**Schelte Adamsz.
Bolswert**

c.1586–1659

Lion Hunt, c. 1625–1629

Engraving

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

11

Rembrandt van Rijn

1606–1669

Large Lion Hunt, 1641

Etching and drypoint

It seems likely that Rembrandt etched his 'Large Lion Hunt' of 1641 in response to Soutman's monumental prints displayed here.

This is one of the few times that Rembrandt treated this subject in his graphic work, and when he produced this hunting scene quite possibly he was aiming to surpass Soutman's etchings in terms of liveliness and truthfulness to nature.

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

17

Pieter Claesz. Soutman

c. 1580–1657 and **Peter Paul Rubens**

The Defeat of Sennacherib,
c. 1618–1620

Black chalk and pen and black ink with grey wash on laid paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Andrew W. Mellon Fund, 1978

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Molly Bretton, Access Officer



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Royal Academy of Arts

Rubens and His Legacy

Van Dyck to Cezanne

Lust



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Rubens and His Legacy Van Dyck to Cezanne

Main Galleries: 24 January – 10 April 2015

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Audio tour



Main commentary



Descriptive
commentary



55: Rubens and Breughel the Elder,
'Pan and Syrinx', cat 55



Jordaens, 'Pan and Syrinx', cat 56



Van Dyck (attrib.), 'Drunken Silenus
Supported by Satyrs', cat 58



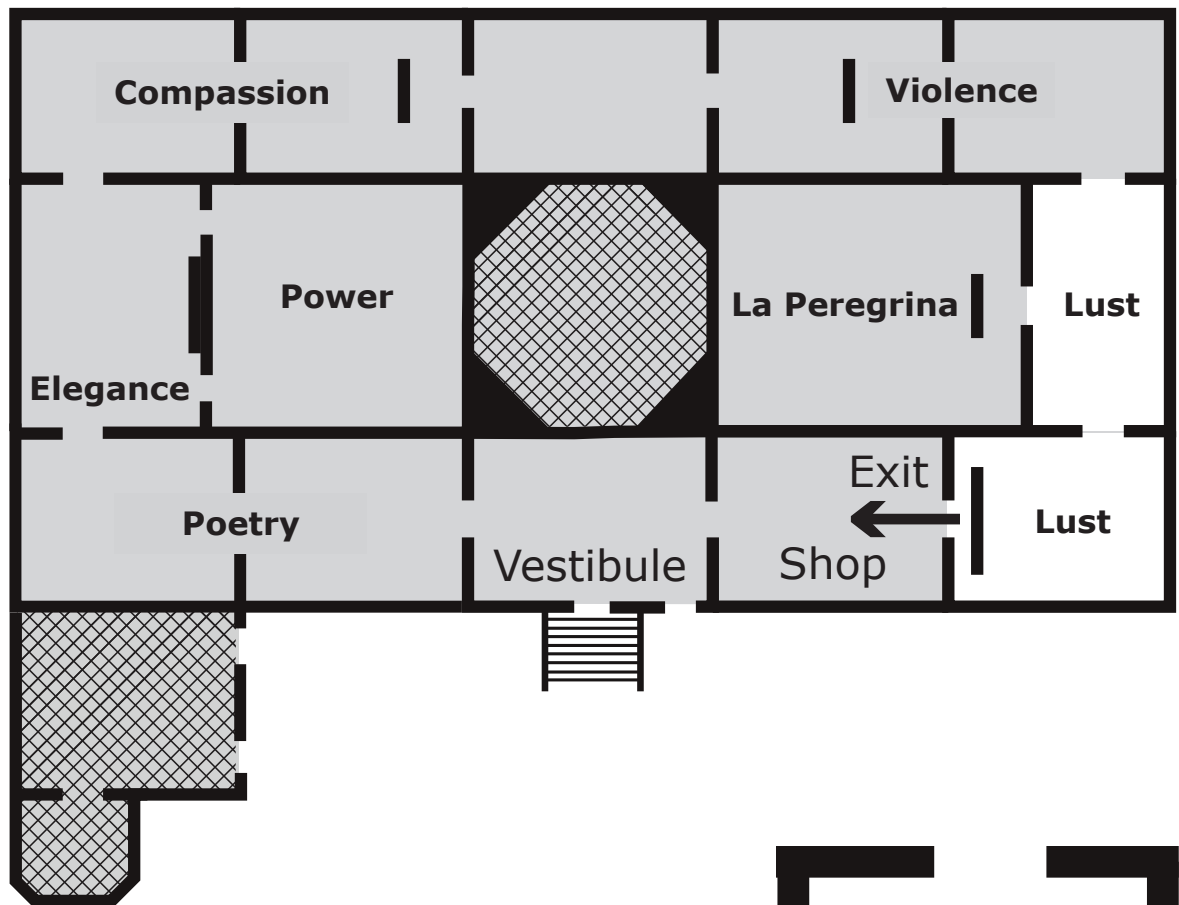
Daumier, 'Drunken Silenus', cat 63



Rubens, 'Venus Frigida', cat 53

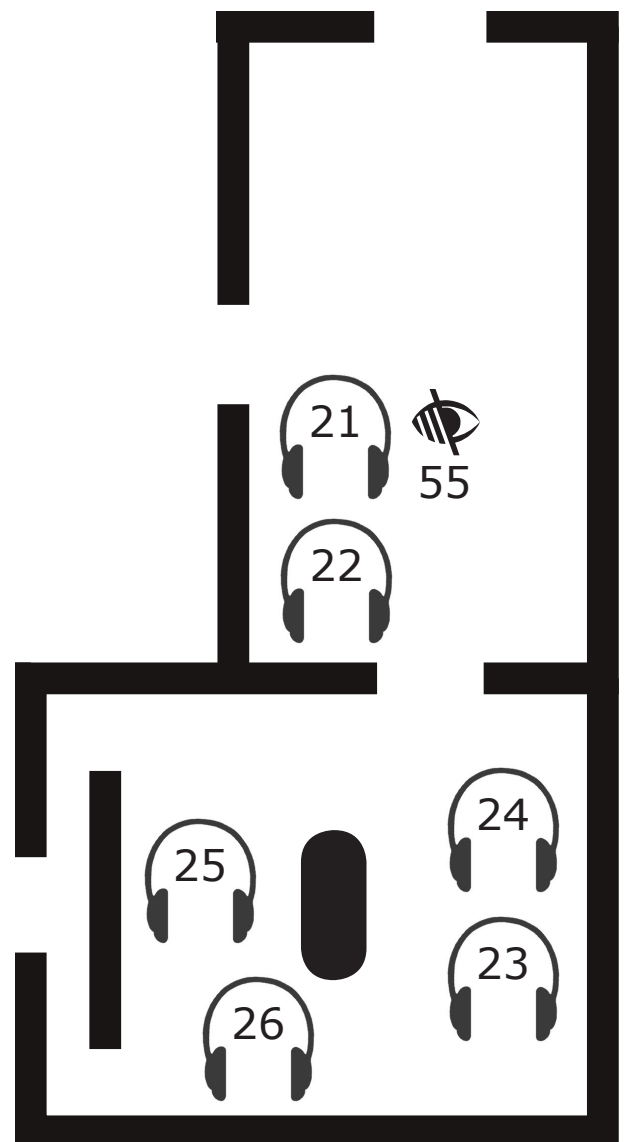


Manet, 'Surprised Nymph' (study), cat 67



You are
in Lust

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77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82

Lust

Rubens enjoyed painting buxom nudes.

He portrayed them as sensual, ripe and blushing, most often playing a passive role in any given situation. The artist has, therefore, often been accused of portraying women simply as objects of desire and of coercing the spectator into the role of a voyeur.

The triumph of Rubens's nudes is his magnificent evocation of the texture of human skin, represented in such a way it feels almost palpable.

We see blood coursing through the veins of the voluptuous flesh. The delicate mother-of-pearl complexions of the female bodies radiate with light. Their soft skin suggests vulnerability and invites you to touch it.

The secret of Rubens's success lies in his virtuoso painting technique: he created graduated tones of an endless subtlety by applying pink and ivory paint on a grey ground, alternating transparent and opaque colours.

Many artists, including Renoir, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux and Cézanne, admired and translated this pictorial quality in their own work.

Rubens's nudes were, as per tradition, drawn from mythological, literary and sometimes biblical sources. The erotic charge he gave to popular themes like that seen in 'Susanna and the Elders', and nymphs pursued by satyrs or uncovered in their sleep, excited both his contemporaries and later artists.

Rembrandt, Boucher and Fragonard all fell under their spell while Manet and Picasso transported them into modernity.

Meanwhile the caricatural and wild aspect of Rubens's bacchanalian scenes exerted a huge pull on such nineteenth-century French artists as Honoré Daumier; Watteau was also drawn to them while Johann Liss and Narcisse-Virgile Díaz de la Peña selected from, and reinvented, them to suit their own artistic aims.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

74

Jean-Antoine Watteau

1684–1721

Nymph and Satyr, or Jupiter and Antiope, 1715

Oil on canvas

Watteau came up with a particularly original response to Rubens's voyeuristic compositions. In this painting Antiope is so relaxed as she sleeps that her left arm dangles freely downwards. The satyr uncovers her and is clearly delighted at the sight of her naked beauty, licking his lips in anticipation.

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Peintures

68

Peter Paul Rubens

The Hermit and the Sleeping Angelica, 1626–1628

Oil on panel

Rubens's painting portrays a scene from 'Orlando Furioso' by the Renaissance poet Ludovico Ariosto.

An old hermit falls in love with the beautiful Angelica. In order to abduct her to a desolate island, he gives her a magic potion to drink, so that she will fall asleep and he can admire and touch her at his leisure.

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie

75

François Boucher

1703–1770

Pan and Syrinx, 1759

Oil on canvas

The **piquanteries** of the Rococo originated in cabinet pictures such as Rubens's 'The Hermit and the Sleeping Angelica'.

Boucher transformed Rubens's nudes into playful dolls with rosy buttocks and innocent eyes. The girls exude the erotic appeal that was so popular during this period and corresponded with the libertarian ideas of French aristocrats.

The National Gallery, London. Presented by Mrs Robert Hollond, 1880

70

Sir Anthony van Dyck

1599–1641

Jupiter and Antiope, c. 1620

Oil on canvas

It would be tempting to think that this painting was inspired by the composition of Rubens's 'The Hermit and the Sleeping Angelica'.

However, the work was executed some years earlier.

Van Dyck's sensual nude is nonetheless entirely Rubensian in character. Her nakedness is similarly revealed to the viewer, but in this more sexually charged rendition of the myth Jupiter and the eagle both seemingly share an urge to throw themselves onto Antiope.

Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent

71

Attributed to Willem Basse

1613–1672

Jupiter and Antiope, 1628–1648

Etching

On long-term loan to Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Lent by Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten

72

Rembrandt van Rijn

1606–1669

Jupiter and Antiope, 1659

Etching

Rembrandt has placed his Antiope in a down bed. A much older-looking Jupiter tentatively steals up to the sleeping woman.

The sense of imminent physical violence is all but absent; an air of doubt surrounds the potency of the god.

With her daringly foreshortened facial features, Antiope seems closely related to the figure of Angelica in Rubens's 'The Hermit and the Sleeping Angelica'.

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Mr and Mrs De Bruijn-van der Leeuw Bequest, Muri

73

Pablo Picasso

1881–1973

**Faun Uncovering a Sleeping
Woman, 12 June 1936**

Etching and aquatint on laid paper

It has often been suggested that Rembrandt's 'Jupiter and Antiope' was the model for Picasso's 'Faun Uncovering a Sleeping Woman'. Picasso certainly went much further: his younger and taut faun is already reaching for the breast of the slumbering beauty, who seems to shift luxuriantly in her sleep.

The "couple" in his etching has often been read as Picasso himself and his lover and muse Marie-Thérèse Walter.

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

81

Wilhelm Leibl

1844–1900

Pastoral Scene, 1870

Oil on canvas

In October 1870 Leibl copied Rubens's 'Pastoral Scene' in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. The coquettish smile of the shepherdess and her unwillingness to accept the man's advances are perfectly clear in both paintings.

However, the German artist did not attempt to replicate Rubens's sophisticated use of washes but instead concentrated on the expressivity and dynamism of his brushwork, achieving a style reminiscent of that of the Dutch Baroque painter Frans Hals.

Neue Pinakothek, Munich. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen

82

Honoré Daumier

1808–1879

Women Pursued by Satyrs, 1850
(with later additions by the artist)

Oil on canvas

Daumier's somewhat corpulent female figures have long been associated with the work of Rubens. The strong red contours of the female figures, which cause them to stand out all the more against the green background, are reminiscent of certain instances in paintings by Rubens.

There are also precedents in Rubens's work for Daumier's symphony in orange, red and yellow. Yet, with his highly expressive brushwork and more lurid hues, Daumier transports the scene into modernity.

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Adeline Van Horne Bequest

64

Jean-Honoré Fragonard

1732–1806

Nessus and Deianeira, c. 1778

Watercolour on paper

Besides satyrs, centaurs were also regarded as particularly lascivious and lustful.

Fragonard made two drawings after 'Nessus and Deianeira' (1630s; State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg), which is attributed to Rubens and his workshop. The subject is Nessus in the act of ravishing the beautiful Deianeira, Hercules' saving arrow already planted in his side.

On loan from the British Museum, London.

Presented by the Art Fund 1933

56



Jacob Jordaens

1593–1678

Pan and Syrinx, c. 1620

Oil on canvas

Jacob Jordaens's more robust version of Rubens's 'Pan and Syrinx' was presumably intended to rival that painting.

The river Ladon in Rubens's composition is here replaced by a figure of the river god in the right foreground. The down-turned torch in one of the cupids' hands can be read as a reference to the adage "Love killed by its own nourishment".

Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels

Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder

1568–1625

Pan and Syrinx, c. 1617

Oil on panel

The nymph Syrinx tries in vain to escape the lecherous Pan who pursues her and grabs onto the white veil with which she covers herself; but he will never be able to satiate his desire as she will soon metamorphose into a bunch of hollow water reeds.

Rubens represented Syrinx in delicate, finely nuanced hues, her pale skin contrasting with that of the tanned god.

Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel

80

Paul Cézanne

1839–1906

Three Bathers, c. 1875

Oil on canvas

It seems Cézanne was fascinated by the way that Rubens depicted human beings on the move and situated them in their surroundings, and also by his use of colour.

Cézanne's 'Three Bathers' is memorable for the sheer strength of the figures. The hues in their skin recall those used by Rubens – above all in the occasional tinges of blue in combination with glowing, red outlines.

Private collection

54

Peter Paul Rubens and workshop

Fortuna, 1636–1637

Oil on canvas

Here Rubens has cast the antique goddess of Fortune as mistress of the sea. Her pink stole enhances the mother-of-pearl gleam of her skin.

Characteristically Rubens concentrates on the very sensual figure of the goddess; her insecure footing on the orb draws attention to the dynamic physicality of her movements.

Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

76

Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux

1827–1875

Crouching Flora, 1870

Oil on canvas

The renowned sculptor and painter Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux greatly admired Rubens. The pose of his 'Crouching Flora', goddess of spring and flowers, echoes a classical statue of Venus that had also been a source of inspiration for Rubens's 'Venus Frigida'.

Carpeaux's painterly, free, and extremely expressive application of paint is in itself highly reminiscent of the work of Rubens.

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes

78

Auguste Renoir

1841–1919

Bather with Long Hair, c. 1895

Oil on canvas

Auguste Renoir frequently returned to re-examine the work of Rubens, once famously saying: “One day, in the Louvre, I noticed that Rubens had achieved more sense of values with a simple scumble than I had been able to do with all my thick layers of paint”.

The glow Renoir achieves in his skin tones can only have resulted from his study of the shimmering light in Rubens’s depictions of skin.

Musée de l’Orangerie, Paris.

Collection Jean Walter et Paul Guillaume

79

Auguste Renoir

1841–1919

Studies of Pierre Renoir, His
Mother Aline Charigot, Nudes, and
Landscape, 1885–1886

Oil on canvas

The Art Institute of Chicago

57

Christoffel Jegher

1596–1652/1653

Drunken Silenus, c. 1635

Woodcut

This image of Silenus, foster-father and mentor to Bacchus, was based on a composition created by Rubens.

Rubens's image was itself informed by a classical marble statue that he studied in Italy. The bald crown, full beard and snub nose call to mind contemporary images of Socrates – perhaps a reference to the perceived wisdom of Silenus.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

60

Pieter Claesz. Soutman

c.1580–1657

Bacchanal, 1642

Engraving and etching

Soutman's engraving captures Rubens's painted 'Bacchanal' (c. 1613–15; now in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow).

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

63

Honoré Daumier

1808–1879

Drunken Silenus, 1850

Charcoal, brown chalk, sepia wash and white gouache on orange-tinted paper



Described as “Rubens’s lost son”, Honoré Daumier here combines several Rubensian characteristics, without slavishly copying him.

He chose to interpret Rubens’s style instead, giving an impression of his warm colour palette and using very blurred contours which gradually blended in with each other, resulting in a very strong sense of movement.

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Calais

59

Jean-Antoine Watteau

1684–1721

The March of Silenus, c. 1715–1716

Black, red and white chalk on paper

It is very likely that this work by Watteau was influenced by the painting of Silenus now attributed to Van Dyck (on display nearby), although he treats his source of inspiration with considerable freedom.

For example, his Silenus, without a beard, appears younger; there also seems to be a greater air of merriment and abandon than in the Van Dyck painting.

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Gift of Mr and Mrs Paul Shepard Morgan to honour Margaret Morgan Grasselli, Curator of Old Master Drawings, and in honour of the 50th anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, 1991

Attributed to Sir Anthony van Dyck

1599–1641

**Drunken Silenus Supported by
Satyrs, c. 1620**

Oil on canvas

This canvas was in all probability painted by Van Dyck in Rubens's workshop. It portrays Silenus in all his bodily splendour.

The work's painterliness, exuberant character, Bacchanalian energy and movement were clearly among the qualities that attracted future artists.

The National Gallery, London. Bought 1871

77

Narcisse-Virgilio Diaz de la Peña

1807–1876

Nymphs and Satyrs, 1870

Oil on panel

Diaz here seems to transport his nymphs and satyrs into the forest of Fontainebleau, a location to which he frequently returned in his paintings.

The scene recalls bacchanals in paintings by Rubens, and - much like the seventeenth-century master - Diaz uses colour rather than outlines to define individual figures.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,
Cambridge

61

Johann Liss

c.1597–1631

A Bacchanalian Feast, c. 1617

Oil on panel

This group of mythological figures seated around a table in a woodland setting evoke a bacchanalian feast. Their more than relaxed poses indicate that considerable amounts of wine have already been consumed, although not a single wine glass is to be seen.

The figures suggest that Liss had studied a number of oil sketches by Rubens, such as the 'Two Nymphs with a River God' (now in the Museum of Western and Oriental Art, Kiev).

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Purchased with the Cunliffe Fund with contributions from the Art Fund and the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund

62

Antoine Coypel

1661–1722

Bacchus and Ariadne on the Isle of Naxos, c. 1693

Oil on canvas

The themes associated with Bacchus include a love story between Ariadne and the young god of wine himself. Ariadne had arrived on Naxos with her beloved Theseus, but he stole away and left while she was asleep. Bacchus fell in love with her and they married.

Rubens's influence here is particularly apparent in the depiction of the satyrs and nymphs, as well as in the warm colouration of the composition as a whole.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Purchased with funds (by exchange) from the bequest of Edna M. Welsh and the gift of Mrs R. Barclay Scull, 1990

67

Édouard Manet

1832–1883

Study for 'Surprised Nymph', c. 1860

Oil on canvas

Particularly in the early days of his artistic career, Manet repeatedly engaged, in a very original manner, with compositions like 'Susanna and the Elders' by Rubens.

Here he selected the pose of Rubens's figure of the bathing Susanna, to whom he gave a Rubensian fleshiness. But by depicting her in a woodland setting and adding two female attendant figures, he turned the bather into a nymph.

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design,
Oslo

Peter Paul Rubens

Venus Frigida, 1614

Oil on panel

Rubens's painting recalls a line by the Roman playwright Terence: "without Ceres and Liber Venus grows cold" (love withers without food and drink). A voluptuous crouching Venus, accompanied by a shivering Cupid, is approached by Liber, a satyr-like figure who offers her a cornucopia of wheat, grapes and vegetables.

In her pose and vulnerability the goddess recalls depictions of the Old Testament figure of Susanna.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

65

Christoffel Jegher

1596–1652/1653

Susanna and the Elders, c. 1633

Woodcut

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

66

Lucas Vorsterman the Elder

1595–1675

Susanna and the Elders, 1620

Engraving

Vorsterman's engraving was most probably made after a lost original by Rubens.

Susanna, threatened by the elders, looks towards the viewer, searching for help.

However, by wrenching the stole away from Susanna, they reveal her body to the viewer, who unwittingly also becomes a voyeur and in this instant sees more than the actual perpetrators.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

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Royal Academy of Arts

Rubens and His Legacy

Van Dyck to Cezanne

La Peregrina

Looking to Rubens by Jenny Saville RA



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Rubens and His Legacy Van Dyck to Cezanne

Main Galleries: 24 January – 10 April 2015

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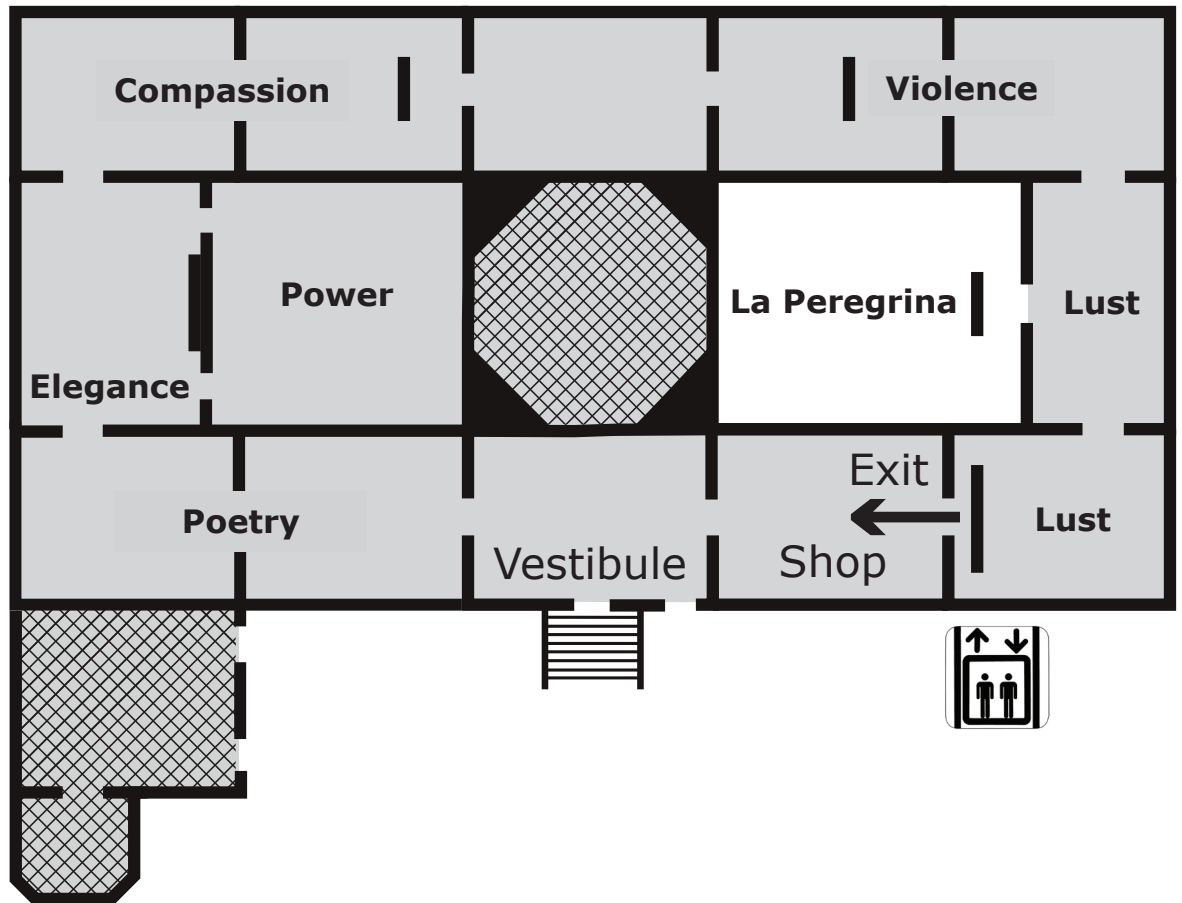


Main commentary

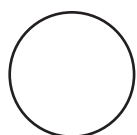
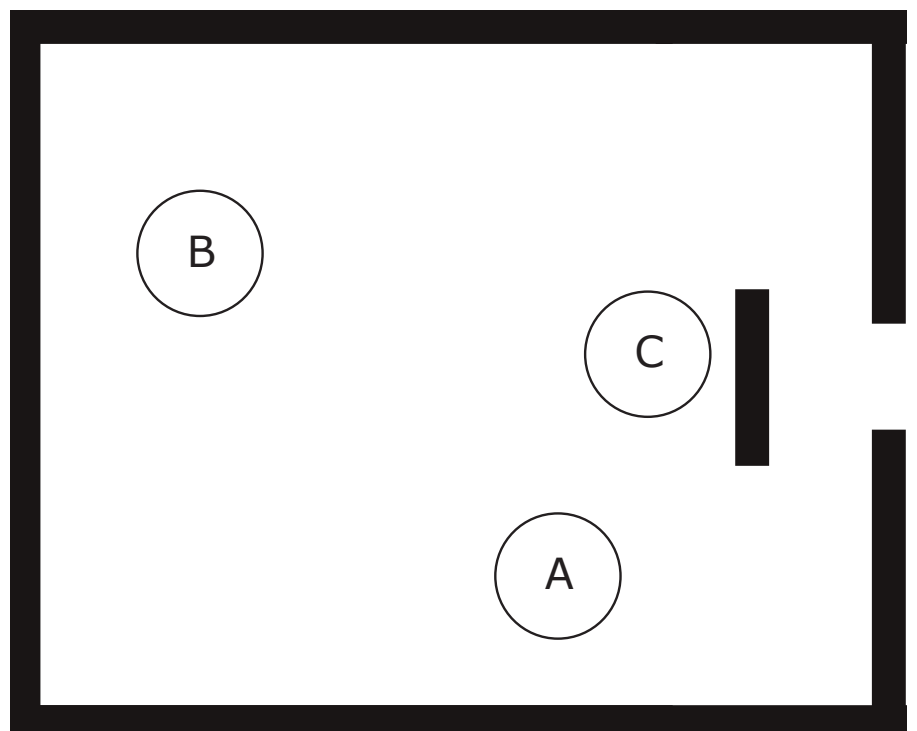


Descriptive
commentary





You are in La Peregrina



Free-standing sculpture

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La Peregrina

Looking to Rubens by Jenny Saville RA

Here British painter Jenny Saville RA has brought together artists from Picasso to the present day whose work connects with Rubens's. From the fleshy handling of paint to the use of colour, violence and spectacle, Saville's selection shows the continuing preoccupations artists share with Rubens.

Her own work echoes Rubens's best-known paintings, presenting direct and uncompromising images of women, moulded with gestural brush strokes on a monumental scale. In this room she shows a work based around the myth of Philomela, a subject Rubens also explored in his work.

Like Rubens, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud and Jenny Saville herself have painted the human form with great expressive force, conveying the "paint made flesh" that began in Venice with Titian.

The contemporary artists Sarah Lucas and Rebecca Warren RA translate Rubens's images of female sensuality into provocative eroticism, expressed through exaggerated physical attributes in ways that also relate to Picasso's 1930's visual explorations of his muse Marie-Therese.

The Flemish master even stands comparison with Andy Warhol: both were preoccupied with spectacle, celebrity, sex and death. Warhol's image of Jacqueline Kennedy in mourning is a secular icon for modern times, a contemporary 'Pietà'.

Cecily Brown is also indebted to Old Master painting and has developed a style where paint is constantly in the process of becoming – forming an image, collapsing and reforming again.

Saville has described her interest in the “pace and tempo” of paint as much as its shaping into an image. Cy Twombly and Willem de Kooning paint in broad, calligraphic brush strokes that explore the material and poetic nature of paint itself.

Like Rubens, Cy Twombly had a life long interest in the ancient Mediterranean world and is showing a work from his Bacchus series made in 2004. De Kooning’s twisting loops of his brush could be seen as the modern day equivalent of the contorted, twisting rhythms of bodies and cloth from Old Master paintings.

It was de Kooning who expressed the Rubensian sentiment that “flesh was the reason oil paint was invented”.

The Baroque period, which Rubens so vividly represents, was named after the term for an imperfect pearl.

Saville's selection takes its title from one of the world's most famous pearls – La Peregrina. The pearl was owned by ruling families of Europe, featured in royal portraits painted by the leading artists of the day, including Rubens, and was more recently owned by Andy Warhol's muse, Elizabeth Taylor.

The title recasts this wandering, layered pearl as an emblem for the legacies alive in the process of art making: to an artist the old and new are just one thing.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Pablo Picasso

1881 – 1973

Woman with Beret, 1937

Oil on canvas

Courtesy Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong

Lucian Freud

1922 – 2011

Naked Portrait II, 1980 – 1981

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Lucian Freud

1922 – 2011

The Start of Sue, 1994

Oil on linen

Private collection

Francis Bacon

1909 – 1992

Self-portrait, 1973

Oil on canvas

Private collection

John Currin

b. 1962

The Clairvoyant, 2001

Oil on canvas

Collection of Mark Fletcher and Tobias Meyer

Rebecca Warren RA

(sculpture A)

b. 1965

When Gaugin, 2014

Hand-painted bronze on painted plinth

Courtesy of the artist

Cecily Brown

b. 1969

The Young and the Restless, 2008

Oil on linen

Courtesy of the artist

Willem de Kooning

1904 – 1997

Untitled, 1970

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Pablo Picasso

1881 – 1973

Bust of a Woman, 1970

Oil on corrugated cardboard

Gagosian Gallery

Willem de Kooning

1904 – 1997

Woman in a Garden, 1971

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Sarah Lucas (sculpture B)

b. 1962

Two Fried Eggs and a Kebab, 1992

Table, fried eggs, kebab, photograph

Murderme

Cy Twombly

1928 – 2011

Bacchus, 1994

Acrylic on wood

Private collection

Willem de Kooning

1904 – 1997

Untitled, IX, 1977

Oil on canvas

Fondation Hurbert Looser, Zurich

Frank Auerbach

b. 1931

Head of Catherine Lampert, 2003

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Frank Auerbach

b. 1931

Head of Catherine Lampert, 2005

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Jenny Saville RA

b. 1970

Voice of the Shuttle (Philomela),
2014 - 2015

Private collection

Pablo Picasso

1881 – 1973

The Dream and Lie of Franco, 1937

Etching

Courtsey Galerie Kornfeld, Bern

Andy Warhol

1928 – 1987

Jacqueline, 1964

Oil on canvas

WAVE: Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Francis Bacon

1909 – 1992

Sleeping Figure, 1959

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Sarah Lucas (sculpture C)

b. 1962

Suffolk Bunny, 1997 - 2004

Tan tights, blue stockings, chair, clamp, kapok, wire

Private collection, courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London

Pablo Picasso

1881 – 1973

The Painter and His Model, 1963

Oil on canvas

Private collection

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Molly Bretton, Access Officer



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