

KUNST  
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**OCTOBER 17, 2017 -  
JANUARY 21, 2018**

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**RUBENS  
THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATION**

An exhibition organised by the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna and the Städel Museum, Frankfurt

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) was a star during his lifetime, and he remains a star today. His name is synonymous with an entire period in art history, the Baroque, but contemporary art too cannot ignore him. The extraordinary oeuvre of this artistic genius comprises large-scale altarpieces more dynamic and full of coloristic punch than anything produced by his contemporaries, as well as sensual nudes and dramatic compositions. But Rubens

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is also renowned for his intimate and private paintings, such as his celebrated “The Fur” now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna; it is the artist’s declaration of his love for his beautiful second wife, H el ene Fourment. And “Stormy Landscape with Philemon and Baucis”, a painting Rubens probably began because he became interested in the problems of depicting landscape and which he continued to work on throughout his life, is a magnificent and vibrant composition.

This special exhibition invites visitors to see these and other masterpieces now in Vienna in the context of Rubens’ preparatory drawings, oil sketches, panel paintings and canvases. The works on show – among them around seventy loans from the world’s foremost collections such as the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, the Prado in Madrid or the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. – have been carefully selected to create juxtapositions and confrontations that document how Rubens worked, how he created his vivid, carefully contrived artworks.

The show thus focuses on the most fascinating aspect of Rubens’ art: his critical analysis and use of external sources and ideas. With the help of selected examples the exhibition illustrates how Rubens was inspired by other artists, by both contemporary and Renaissance compositions. Throughout his life he also entered into a creative dialogue with ancient and Renaissance sculpture.

Using these extrinsic formulae as his starting point he evolved his own ideas, expressing them in rapidly executed, amazingly modern pen drawings, which, in turn, served as the basis for his more elaborate oil sketches. In this way Rubens appropriated the art of others in at times surprising ways, turning it into something entirely his own and creating a huge visual reservoir that continually engendered new ideas, so that, for example, the appearance and pose of some classical centaur that Rubens had studied in Rome ends up serving as the model for a depiction of Christ. It is truly amazing how Rubens is able to conflate the Saviour’s figure with that of a composite mythological creature devoured by desire to create a convincing erotic male body. It is such fascinating confluences that form the basis for the powerful emotions generated by Rubens’ works.

However, these sources and transformative processes are generally hidden and are revealed only on closer inspection: in the exhibition visitors are invited to identify and discover these artistic quotes in Rubens’ compositions. By comparing the artist’s model or inspiration and his new creation visitors will be able to

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appreciate and comprehend Rubens' unrivalled power to change and reinvent.

February 8, – May 21, 2018 the exhibition will be on show at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt.

The exhibition is curated by Gerlinde Gruber, curator, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Stefan Weppelmann, Director of the Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien and Jochen Sander, Adjunct director and curator, Städel Museum, Frankfurt.

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## PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

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These images may be used free of charge when writing about the exhibition; to download them please go to <http://press.khm.at>.



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)

**Self-Portrait**

c.1638, oil on canvas, 110 x 85.5 cm

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 527

© KHM-Museumsverband



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)

**Crown of Thorns (Ecce Homo)**

no later than 1612, oil on panel, 125.7 x 96 cm

St Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, inv. no. GE 3778

© The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg 2017



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)

**Centaur Tamed by Cupid** (on display in the exhibition as facsimile)

c. 1601/02, black chalk on paper, 481 x 371 mm

Cologne, Wallraf Richartz Museum & Fondation Corboud,

inv. no. Z 5888

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Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
Frans Snyders (eagle)  
**Prometheus**  
1611/12–1618, oil on canvas, 242.6 x 209.6 cm  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, purchased with the  
W. P. Wilstach Fund, 1950, inv. no. W1950-3-1  
© Photo Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
**The Lamentation**  
1614, oil on oak, 40.5 x 52.5 cm  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 515  
© KHM-Museumsverband



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
**Venus Frigida**  
1614, oil on oak panel, 145.1 x 185.6 cm  
Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 709  
© www.lukasweb.be - Art in Flanders vzw



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
**The Four Rivers of Paradise**  
c.1615, oil on canvas, 208 x 283 cm  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 526  
© KHM-Museumsverband



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
**The Four Rivers of Paradise (detail)**  
c.1615, oil on canvas, 208 x 283 cm  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 526  
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Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)

**The Head of Medusa**

1617–18, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 118 cm

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 3834

© KHM-Museumsverband



**Colubrid** (cast from nature)

Padua, 16<sup>th</sup> century, bronze, l. 18,6 cm

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer Wien

© KHM-Museumsverband



Titian (c. 1488 Pieve di Cadore - 1576 Venice)

**Ecce Homo (Christ presented to the people)**

1543, oil on canvas, 242 x 361 cm

Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 73

© KHM-Museumsverband



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)

**A group of ten men standing on a flight of steps with a young woman and child**

after Titian

late 1620s, black and red chalk, pen and black ink on paper, 324 x 410 mm

Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art

Gift of Mrs. Alice Kaplan, acc. no. 2001.121.1

© National Gallery of Art, Washington



Titian (c. 1488 Pieve di Cadore - 1576 Venice)

**Girl in a fur**

c.1535, oil on canvas, 95,5 x 63,7 cm

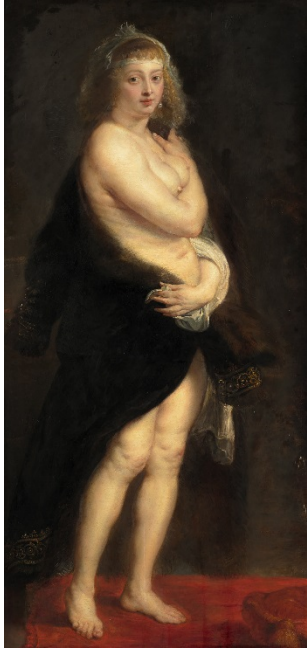
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 89

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Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
**Helena Fourment ("Het Pelsken")**  
1636/38, oil on oak, 178.7 x 86.2 cm  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 688  
© KHM-Museumsverband



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
**The Judgment of Paris**  
c.1639, oil on canvas, 199 x 381 cm  
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. no. P1669  
© Museo Nacional del Prado



Peter Paul Rubens (1577 Siegen - 1640 Antwerp)  
**The Feast of Venus**  
1636/37, oil on canvas, 217 x 350 cm  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GG 684  
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## OPENING HOURS AND ENTRANCE FEES

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Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Thursdays until 9 p.m.

*Open daily in December!*

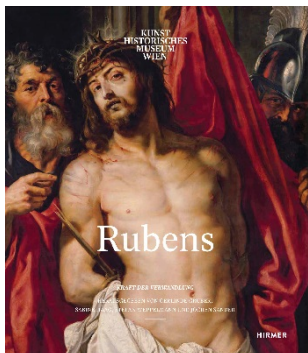
Annual Ticket	€ 44
Adults	€ 15
Vienna Card	€ 14
Concessions	€ 11
Annual ticket under 25	€ 25
Children under 19	free
Group ticket (p.p.)	€ 11
Guided Tour	€ 3
Audioguide	€ 4

Buy your online-tickets at:

<https://shop.khm.at/en/ticket-shop/>

## CATALOGUE

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**Rubens. The Power of Transformation**  
Edited by Gerlinde Gruber, Sabine Haag and  
Stefan Weppelmann for the Kunsthistorisches  
Museum  
c. 336 pages and c. 292 images  
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## PRESS CONTACT

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