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KRISTIN LOHSE BELKIN

The Drawings of Peter Paul Rubens *A Critical Catalogue*

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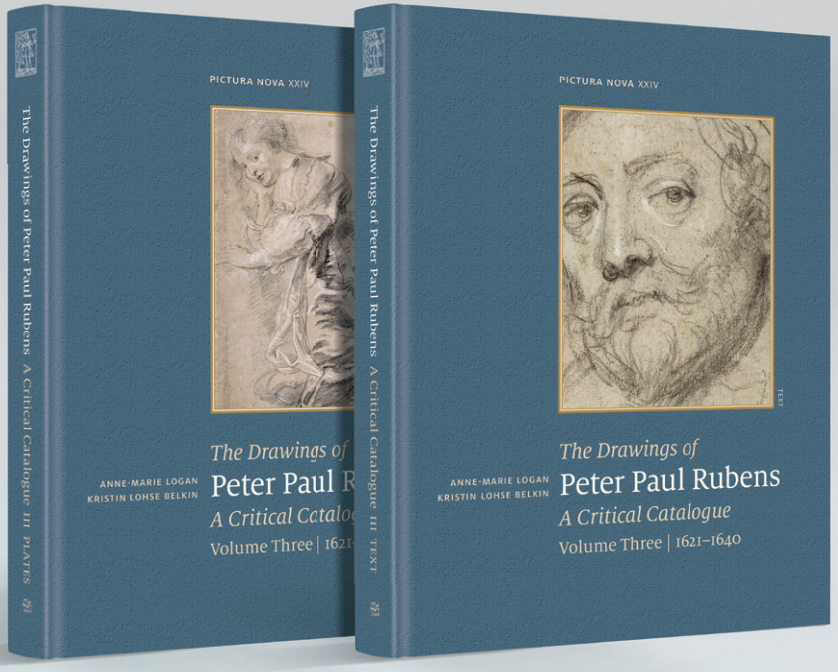
Volume Three | 1621–1640



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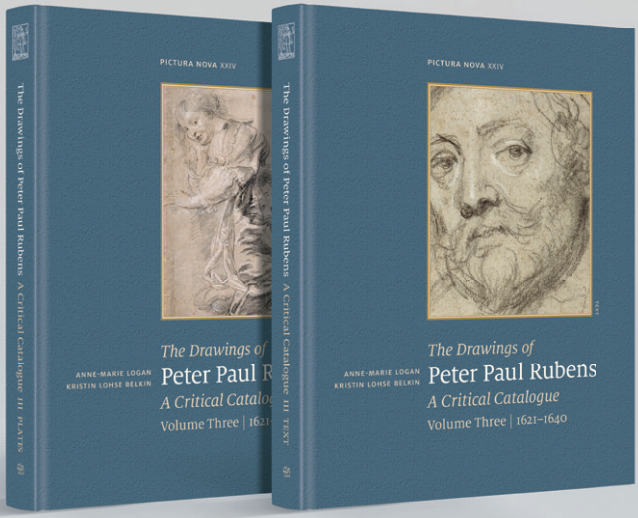

Volume Three | 1621–1640

This is the final volume of the *catalogue raisonné* of the drawings by Peter Paul Rubens, covering the years 1621–1640. The project is a collaboration between Anne-Marie Logan, to whom belong all the Rubens attributions, and Kristin Lohse Belkin. It is the first publication that presents the artist's entire drawn oeuvre in chronological order, previous such publications containing only selections of drawings. Accordingly, Volume III consists of the drawings from 1621 to the artist's death in 1640.

2 vols, 536 p., 260 col. ills, 216 x 280 mm, 2025
ISBN 978-2-503-59956-4
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Series: Pictura Nova, vol. 24

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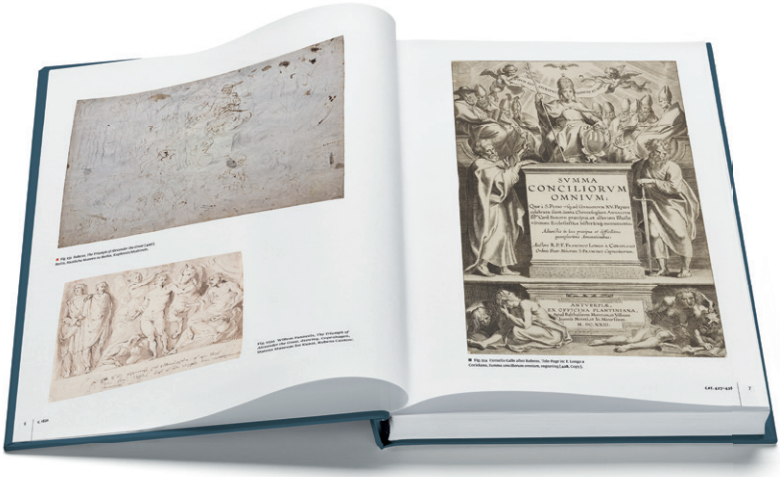
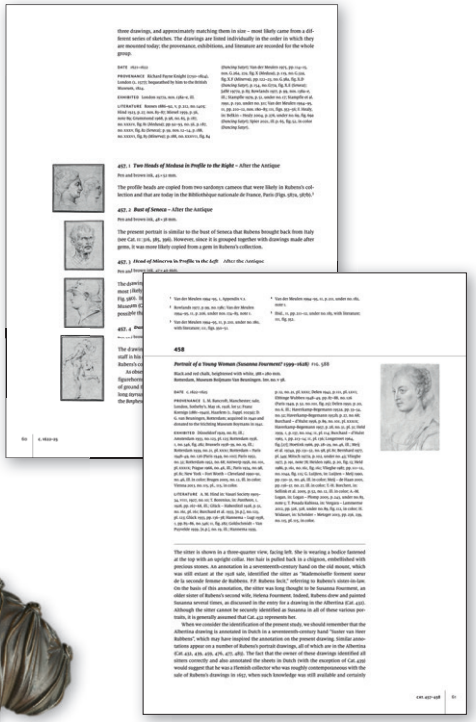
The first decade is characterized by Rubens's first foreign commission, the paintings for the Luxembourg Palace, Marie de' Medici, the Queen Mother's new residence in Paris, and by the demands of the artist's diplomatic missions to the courts of Madrid and London. In contrast to the works requested by Rubens's official duties, especially portraiture, a subject not of primary interest to the artist before, are the paintings and drawings of the second decade, predominantly inspired by the elderly painter's marriage to the young Helena Fourment and the love and deep affection for his wife and her children. Court portraits are replaced by images of his family à trois crayons, Rubens preferred medium in these years. Helena in disguise appears in the artist's religious, mythological and genre paintings, most gloriously in the series of drawings for The Garden of Love. Commissions for altarpieces continue but unlike the black chalk anatomical studies of the 1610s, preparatory drawings now consist of head studies in black and red chalk, the latter used for the capture and color of skin. At the same time, images of domestic bliss are accompanied by drawings of the Flemish countryside, especially after Rubens's purchase of the seignorial estate "Het Steen" in 1635.

In addition, Rubens continues to design title-pages and even to make copies after older works of art that constitute such a large part of his earliest output. But the activity of copying the works of his predecessors for the purpose of artistic instruction now has turned into the antiquarian's pursuit of knowledge and the collector's desire and delight, as Rubens records ancient gems and cameos in a series of drawings with the aim of a scholarly publication that, however, never materialized.

As in previous volumes, each entry consists of a detailed physical description of the drawing, provenance, exhibition history, full bibliography and a critical, interpretive discussion. All drawings by Rubens as well as a selection of comparative images are reproduced in color as far as possible.





Vol. I & II Reviewed

"(…) this tremendous undertaking will be a landmark in the Rubens scholarship of recent years, even decades, it has to be said again. The work of Logan and Lohse Belkin has an ambition and scope that goes beyond previous authors on Rubens's drawings. All a reviewer can do is make a few marginal notes. Over and over again, the authors purge lazy attributions from the past literature and Rubens emerges in much clearer focus. Few recent books on the artist can be called indispensable, but this is one of them."

Jeremy Wood,
The Burlington Magazine, December 2024

"One can say straight away that the scholarly apparatus is impeccable. The books, with all works reproduced in color, are elegantly designed (…). One feature which makes the books particularly user friendly is the fact all comparative material is reproduced – paintings and sketches by Rubens, engravings after Rubens, and works of art by other artists that attracted Rubens's attention, many in obscure locations and absent from earlier catalogues of Rubens's drawings."

Christopher White,
Historians of Netherlandish Art Reviews, October 2023

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KRISTIN LOHSE BELKIN

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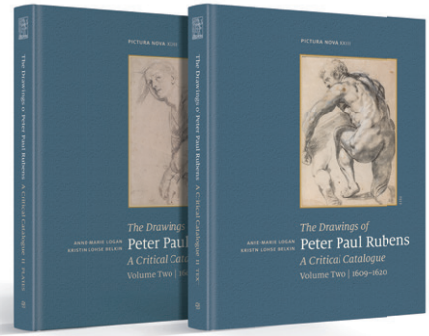

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Volume II consists of the drawings from the time of Rubens's return from Italy and the establishment of his workshop in Antwerp to the completion of his contribution to the furnishing and decoration of the city's new Jesuit church, today's St. Charles Borromeo. The decade is characterized by a broad range of genres and iconography: large altarpieces stand next to cabinet-size pictures, book illustrations next to designs for tapestry, sculpture and architectural reliefs; religious, mythological and historical subjects alternate with allegories, portraits, exotic hunts and scenes from country life.

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Volume I consists of the drawings of the artist's childhood, apprenticeship and first years as a master in Antwerp to his formative years in Italy, spent mostly in Mantua and Rome, with an excursion to Spain. These are the years primarily devoted to learning and absorbing the art of the past, from sixteenth-century German and Netherlandish prints to the works of the ancient and Italian Renaissance masters. A large number of these drawings consists of copies after the works of other artists, largely executed as part of the artistic training at the time.

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