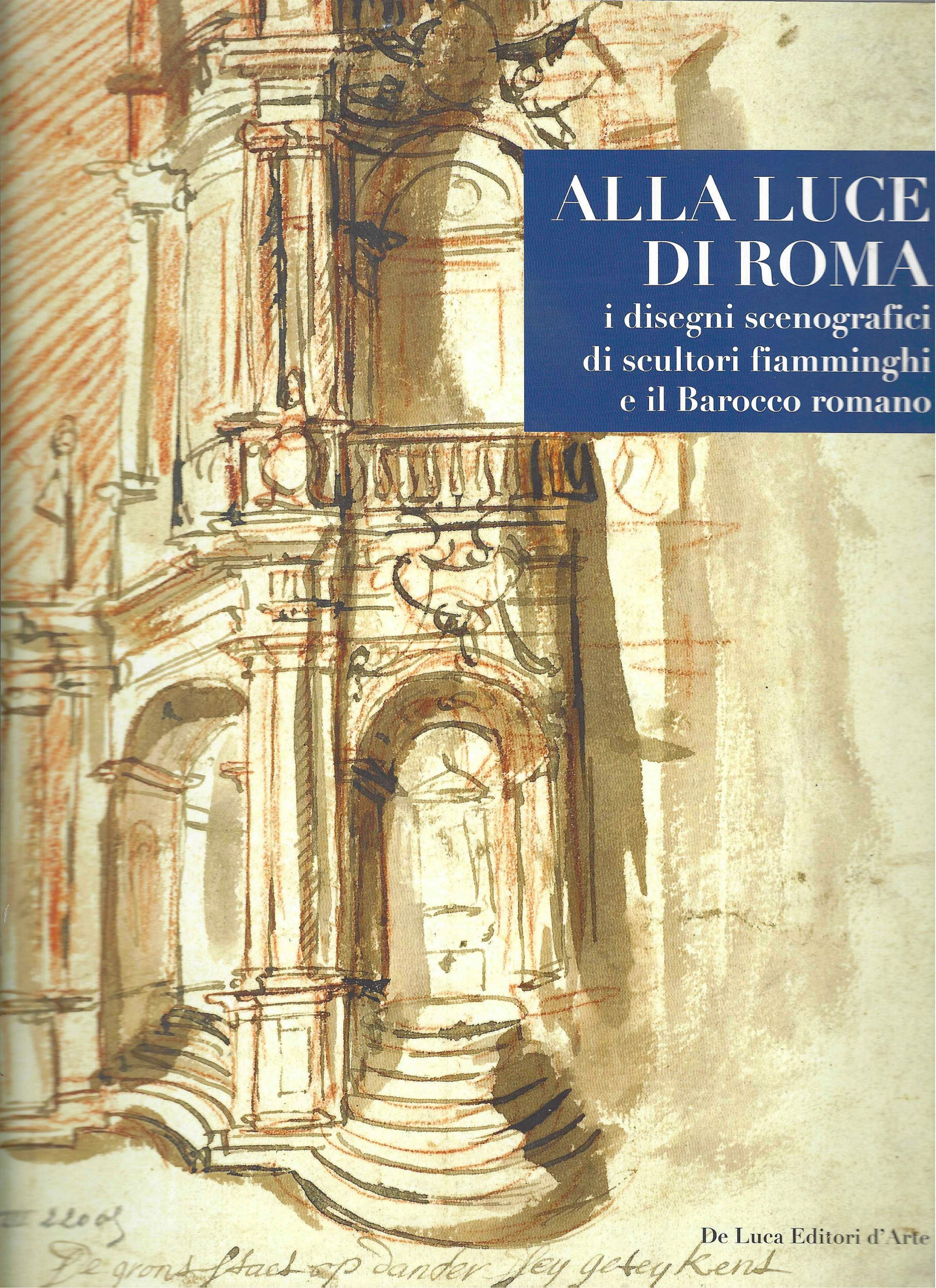




ALLA LUCE DI ROMA

i disegni scenografici
di scultori fiamminghi
e il Barocco romano

De Luca Editori d'Arte

De groen staet op dander sey getey kent

[...] il marmo si sia intenerito in vita [...]*
Rubens and Sculpture: a status quaestionis

VALÉRIE HERREMANS

Antwerp Sculpture Practice anno 1608

Unlike painting, Southern Netherlandish sculpture did not have its heyday in the first half of the 17th century. However, during this period, the foundations were laid for a blooming that would reach its peak in the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century. Peter Paul Rubens' theoretical conceptions were a key part of this founding evolution, disseminated by his activities as a designer, the training of sculptors in his studio and his cooperation with sculptors.

About the time of Rubens' return from his stay in Italy in 1608 some fundamental changes occurred in Antwerp sculpture practice. In 1606 an important turning point was reached in the institutional circumstances Antwerp sculptors had to cope with¹. This turning point was urgently needed to prevent the profession of sculptor in Antwerp to languish any further. Indeed, Antwerp sculpture was at that point in a very sorry state of affairs, since the number of sculptors in Antwerp had fallen to an alarmingly low level around the turn of the century. That many talented sculptors sought their fortune abroad certainly was partly due to these changes on the side of the demand resulting from Catholic reserves towards statues inspired by the Protestant hostility against "sculpted things" (*sculptilia*) and most definitely aggravated by the poor economic climate as a result of the continuing war². But there was also another factor involved. The corporative context in which Antwerp sculptors operated was shaped for centuries on the basis of their raw material. In the course of the 16th century, inspired by the theoretical and emancipatory developments in the arts of Renaissance Italy, a category of sculptors in stone arose which no longer identified with the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints, but with that of St Luke. In this evolution an underlying mechanism was at play, namely the creation of a socio-cultural distinction between practitioners of the *artes liberales* and the *artes mechanicae*.

On July 3 1606, Robrecht de Nole (†1636) petitioned his patron, Archduke Albert, on behalf of all the sculptors of Antwerp, to be allowed to work wholly independently of the

Guild of the Four Crowned Saints. De Nole's move proved successful: the Archduke, who saw no justification for the demands of the masons and stonecutters, pressurized the civic authorities in Antwerp to agree to de Nole's petition. On December 17 1606, the city council gave in and issued a new ordinance with regard to the sculptors, specifying that they: "may henceforth also undertake and execute all manner of works associated with their designs and art, including altars, altar enclosures, rood screens, epitaphs, tombs, galleries, pillars and chimney decorations, and similar artful works and may, with a view to this work, take on and train as many apprentices as they deem necessary, without their being obliged to pay the masons' corporation to this end'. It is evident from the enrolment figures for the Guild of St Luke that the new measure had the desired effect: the number of apprentices, for instance, reached a peak short after 1606.

Few weeks after Rubens' arrival in Antwerp, during the spring of 1609, the Twelve Years Truce was signed. The cessation of hostilities between the Spanish Southern Netherlands and the Dutch Republic would last for over a decade and give the Southern Netherlands a new breath. The Archdukes Albert and Isabella resolutely took the lead of the catholic revival. The necessary refurbishment of the church interiors and the construction of new church buildings after the devastations caused by the war and the new Counter-Reformation fervor created immense new artistic opportunities not least for the different applications of sculpture. Rubens' return from the Belpaese took place at a time when Antwerp artistic life in general, and perspectives for sculptors in particular, experienced a historical peak.

Imitatio: Sculpture and Rubens' Theory of Painting

As Frits Scholten and Marion Boudon-Machuel already rightly remarked earlier, during the 20th century Rubens was ascribed an enormous influence on contemporary sculpture, however this influence can't be grasped easily³. What is there indeed documented with respect to Rubens and sculpture?

* [...] *The marble seems to have softened into living flesh* [...]. M. ROOSES - C. RUELENS 1898, p. 271.

¹ V. HERREMANS 2012, pp. 136-140.

² V. HERREMANS 2016, pp. 123-124.

³ M. BOUDON-MACHUEL 2005b, p. 103; F. SCHOLTEN 2006, p. 49.



8. PETER PAUL RUBENS. *The Four Philosophers* (c. 1611-12; Florence, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, inv. 1912).

Most striking is the fact that sculpture occupies a central place in Rubens' theoretical vision of painting. In his unpublished theoretical notebook which we unfortunately only know by several copies, Rubens devotes a separate part to the meaning of ancient sculptures for painting. The manuscript of only three paragraphs long is entitled: *De imitatione statuarum*. Rubens' theoretical position should be located within the then prevailing views imported from Italy regarding the training of artists, in which the antique *topos* of *imitatio* was a central concept⁴. Pupils were supposed to rely on the best examples from antiquity to develop their own talents. How the students had to deal with the examples, was the subject of many theoretical discussions. According to Rubens they could only imitate the best examples, and they should observe one important principle: when imitating the antique statues, they should not paint a figure of marble, but a lifelike body. The possibilities that possesses the art of painting – in contrast to the art of sculpture – to represent the subtleties of shading, the transparent character of the skin and the changing shapes of the soft parts of the body, must be applied.

Rubens presumably put these theoretical ideas on paper

immediately after his return from the *Belpaese* to Antwerp at the end of 1608. In any case it is certain that he himself put into practice these ideas in several ways. In the first place it is apparent that motifs derived from Classical sculpture played a major part in Rubens' compositions. Soon after his return to the city at the river Scheldt the most notable feature of Rubens' style became the highly sculptural treatment of figures. This adoption of Greco-Roman sculptural motifs is evident both in his religious works and in the allegorical or mythological compositions wherein the heroism of the protagonists is enhanced by the conscious use of antique models. And secondly, there is a specific aspect of Rubens' oeuvre that literally illustrates his theory on the representation of sculpture by a painter, namely the numerous works in which he depicts himself a sculpture. A striking example for instance one can see in the background of the *Four Philosophers* (Palazzo Pitti) (fig. 8).

The important position sculpture occupied in the genesis of his paintings appears in the first place from Rubens' study material, which consisted primarily of a large collection of drawings. This important studio "capital" is known as the "*Rubens cantoor*" after the place where these folios were kept. A large part of them consist of copies of antique sculptures of which many saw the light during Rubens' stay in Italy between 1600-1608. Next to the surviving original drawing themselves, a very interesting source of knowledge for the composition of Rubens' collection are the series of copies that were made by Willem Panneels (†1634) after drawings from the so-called *cantoor*, today kept at the National Gallery of Denmark⁵. It proves Rubens made systematic and accurate copies from different angles of the great sculptures of Antiquity in the Roman collections of that time, such as the famous Laocoon group, the torso Belvedere or the Hercules Farnese and several others⁶.

Remarkably enough, there are also copies in the collection after contemporary sculptures. This means that these works must have corresponded to his own strict selection criteria since, as is apparent from *De imitatione statuarum*, according to Rubens only the copying of the best sculptures for painters was advisable. For instance, one of the drawings is a copy after Giambologna's famous representation of Mercury. According to Jeremy Wood the drawing was made after a reduced bronze copy that probably was in possession of Rubens himself⁷. Even more interesting is Panneels' folio with copies from four different angles of the left arm of Michelangelo's Mozes in San Pietro in Vincoli⁸. The inscription tells us he made it after a molded (*geboetseert*) reduction of the model⁹.

Another interesting reference to casts of contemporary sculpture can be found in Rubens' correspondence. In his

⁴ U. HEINEN 1996, p. 21.

⁵ J. GARFF - F. DE LA FUENTE PEDERSEN 1988, *passim*; A. BALIS - C. DEPAUW - E. DUVERGER 1993, *passim*.

⁶ M. VAN DER MEULEN 1994, *passim*.

⁷ J. WOOD 2011, vol. 1, pp. 30 & 439-440.

⁸ Strictly spoken, the expression *geboetseert* refers to a built up object commonly executed in clay, but it is certainly possible as Jeffrey Muller proposes,

that Panneels actually referred to a (painted) plaster cast. J.M. MULLER - F. HEALY - K. BELKIN 2004, p. 55.

⁹ It remains however unclear whether it was a reduction of the whole statue or rather of the arm only. J. GARFF & F. DE LA FUENTE PEDERSEN 1988, n. 54: "*dit aermken hebbe ick geteekent naer den/ moeijes van michael angel endewas/ int cleijn geboetseert, dees twee armkens zijn oock geteekent/ naert selve geboetseert armken*".



9. FRANÇOIS DUQUESNOY. Funerary monument for Ferdinand Van Den Eynden (c. 1633; Rome, Santa Maria dell'anima).

famous apologetic letter addressed to François Duquesnoy (1597-1643) dated April 17th 1640, written only few weeks prior to his death, Rubens thanks his compatriot for sending him plaster casts of the two putti decorating the epitaph of Ferdinand van den Eynden in Santa Maria dell'Anima (fig. 9): “[...] still less can I praise conveniently their beauty: it is less art than nature that carved them; the marble seems to have softened into living flesh”. Less frequently cited in the relevant literature is Rubens’ mention of the fact that the sculptor also had sent models (*modelli*): “[...] per li modelli mandati [...]”¹⁰. The question however remains whether it concerned drawings or sculpted models. Finally, there is also the fact that Rubens in the year of his death sold a “plaster back” to his pupil Lucas Faydherbe (1617-1697)¹¹.

In addition to these drawings, (reduced) models and casts, which made the study of famous sculptures in his studio possible, Rubens also had authentic sculptures in his possession. Rubens was an avid collector. His activities in this field began after his return to Antwerp in 1608, when he set about collecting small antique sculptures, coins, and gems, including cameos and intaglios¹². His greatest coup was doubtless his acquisition in 1618 of the brilliant collection of Sir

Dudley Carleton in return for a group of his own paintings. In 1626 he sold the collection again, at least partly, to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham¹³. In the inventory of his house made up after Rubens’ death “*Aucunes belles testes antiques de marbre*” still are mentioned, immediately followed by “*Une quantité des figures modernes, &c*”¹⁴. Certainly, some of these ancient sculptures, such as for instance the bust of “Seneca” which he brought from Italy in 1608, he will have considered of sufficient quality so that they could be regarded as objects of study (fig. 8).

Rubens thus clearly believed that sculpture and more specifically the best sculptures, be it ancient or modern masterpieces, played an important part in the education and artistic development of the painter. Rubens’ theoretical position and his collection of drawings to sculptures, castings, perhaps models but also authentic sculptures, thus highlight his view on the relationship between painting and sculpture, the latter being the object of study and a source of inspiration. These findings are certainly very interesting and they reveal which qualities Rubens considered important in sculpture, but they still tell us nothing about the meaning of Rubens himself and of his own work for contemporary sculpture. How did Rubens relate to the sculpture of his time, an art that was still trying to reclaim its place among the liberal arts and that was on the verge of a new era?

Disegno: the Father of Painting, Sculpture & Architecture¹⁵

A very important key to a better understanding of Rubens’ relationship to the sculptors and sculpture of his time lies in the apprenticeship of Lucas Faydherbe in Rubens’ workshop and in the certificate that is evidence of this (fig. 10). Until now, the presence of a sculptor like Faydherbe in Rubens’ studio mainly has been situated within the context of a commitment by Rubens for a greater integration between the arts. In this article, however, I would like to focus on another aspect that in my view has been somewhat neglected. Very little attention is given to the special nature of this apprenticeship, in particular, the fact that a young artist with a family background situated in the Malines sculpture production and most probably with the intention to start his own career as a sculptor went to study with a painter, and moreover, not the least important.

Very likely this remarkable choice should be placed against the background of the contemporary developments in sculpture which are also reflected in his family history. Faydherbe most probably arrived in Rubens’ studio in 1636. Three years earlier his aunt, the famous woman sculptor Maria Faydherbe (1587-1643), ended up in a conflict with the Malines guild of Saint Luke¹⁶. The exact cause of the

¹⁰ “[...] e molto meno sò spiegare le lodi della loro bellezza; se li habbia scolpiti piuttosto la natura che l’arte; il marmo si sia intenerito in vita”. M. ROOSES – C. RUELENS 1898, p. 271.

¹¹ “*eenen rugge van plaester*”. MALINES 1997, p. 26.

¹² J.M. MULLER - F. HEALY - K. BELKIN 2004, pp. 260-62.

¹³ Most probably he had made casts of the sold sculptures before their departure. In any case, an 18th century source testifies that also casts of antique works

of art were present in Rubens’ house. *Ibidem*, p. 260.

¹⁴ *Specification Des Peintures Trouvees* 1640, as published in *Ibidem*, p. 333.

¹⁵ “*Perché il Disegno, padre delle tre Arti nostre Architettura, Scultura & Pittura [...]*”. G. VASARI 1568, p. 43, as cited in W. OECHSLIN 2014, p. 17.

¹⁶ K. ALEN 2015, pp. 77-99, including the reference to all relevant reading regarding this famous case.



10. LUCAS II FRANCHOYS. Portrait of Lucas Faydherbe (Mechelen, Stedelijk Museum Hof van Busleyden).

conflict is not known, but it is clear that artistic quality, size and the material are being used as an argument in the discussion. The sculptor seems to regard her colleagues as “*dozynwerkers*”, executors of serial work, while they themselves are challenging Maria to make all kinds of figurative sculptures “as artful as possible, of big or small size made as well in wood as in stone.” At the same time, we see in the work of his aunt, but also that of his uncle, sculptor Anthoon Faydherbe (†1653) an unmistakable style innovation in contrast to the traditional wooden devotional sculpture made in Malines during the 16th and the early 17th centuries¹⁷.

The Faydherbe family must undoubtedly have been well aware of the developments that Antwerp sculpture had gone through the past decades. Lucas Faydherbe’s father Hendrik (1574-1629), also a sculptor and a gilder, fled looking for work to Antwerp in 1608, two years after the Antwerp sculp-

tors had acquired their new status¹⁸. To what this new developments led is aptly illustrated by the series of monumental apostle sculptures executed by Antwerp sculptors – not local sculptors – for the Malines cathedral in the 1620-30s¹⁹. Their monumental baroque design must have been in stark contrast to what was still being produced by local sculptors at that time, and must have left a deep impression on a young sculptor apprentice as Lucas Faydherbe. Maybe the Antwerp sculptors who executed the series, including the van Milderts, father Hans and son Cornelis, played a role in Faydherbe’s admission to Rubens’ studio. Hans van Mildert (1588-1638), after all, was a good friend of the painter and he also worked closely with him.

Faydherbe stayed for more than three years in Rubens’ studio, but had to leave unforeseen and cancel a planned trip to Italy, because of the unplanned pregnancy of his fiancée Maria Sneyers. On April 5 1640 Rubens wrote for his pupil a certificate regarding his apprenticeship which is sufficiently well known. One passage in the document already received considerable attention as it seems to provide an explanation for the remarkable presence of Faydherbe in Rubens’ studio: “and because of the community that our arts of painting and sculpture together have, with my instructions and his diligence and fine genius, he has gained a lot in his art”²⁰. With Rubens’ synthesizing approach in his designs destined for ephemeral decorations, frontispieces and frames for his altarpieces and epitaphs in mind, these words are considered a reference to Rubens’ integrative vision of the arts. The acceptance of Faydherbe as an apprentice is regarded as a step in the actual realization of Rubens’ ideal of the allied arts. With this interpretation the word “*ghemeynschap*” is translated in precise terms as a factual unity to which the arts, in this case painting and sculpture, belong together.

I would however like to point out here the second possible meaning of these words, which also provides a satisfying explanation for the presence of Faydherbe as an apprentice in Rubens’ studio. In fact, Rubens may have had in mind what was the most obvious within the context of the relevant training – of a sculptor but admittedly by a painter – that in which the painter *could* train the sculptor. This logically is what both arts, painting and sculpture, have in common and this is precisely what “*ghemeynschap*” means in its 17th century first and abstract meaning: to have something in common. And this common ground was, since Giorgio Vasari, undoubtedly considered to be *disegno*, comprising not only drawing but also the essence of creative design, making it together the intellectual component of the visual arts²¹. Faydherbe was trained by Rubens in the discipline of drawing and design, and it was this both theoretical and practical knowledge that enabled Faydherbe to make great progress “in *his* art”²². The notion of

¹⁷ Faydherbe’s father died when he was twelve. MALINES 1997, pp. 18-21.

¹⁸ MALINES 1997, p. 10.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

²⁰ “[...] ende door de *ghemeynschap* die onse consten van *schildery* en *beldhouvery* t’ saemen hebben, met myne instructien ende syne neerstigheyt ende goeden gheest, seer veel *gheprofiteert* heeft in syne conste, [...]”, in D. COEKELBERGHS 2011;

F. SCHOLTEN 2006, pp. 44-45.

²¹ For the dissemination of Vasari’s art theory in the North see E. WOUK 2014, pp. 105-126.

²² His Art being sculpture, a clear distinction was made by Rubens with his “own” art, painting.

disegno as an underlying and style-developing factor is central to the relationship of Rubens to sculpture, as will be evident from his collaboration with contemporary sculptors.

RUBENS' DESIGNS FOR (ARCHITECTURAL) SCULPTURE

Meeting a Need

There is not much known about the place *disegno* occupied in the sculpture practice during the first half of the 17th century. However, two facts are certain. The first is that in circles of the pace-setting 16th century Southern Netherlandish sculptors, the sculptural model made from clay or wax occupied a central place in design practice²³. Perhaps Cornelis Floris (1514-1575) had this practice imported from Italy, where it was well established as illustrated by the famous anecdote that Baldinucci recounts about the young Giambologna and Michelangelo²⁴. The second element is the lack of drawn models for sculpture by sculptors until well into the 17th century. Related to this second element is the fact that leading 17th century sculptors such as Artus Quellinus the elder (1609-1668) and Artus Quellinus the Younger (1625-1700) were working in a context where abundant knowledge regarding *disegno* was available because they had close relatives who were painters²⁵. Furthermore, we observe that in the last quarter of the 17th century, perhaps not coincidentally after the founding of the academy in Antwerp in 1663, the number of drawn sculptor's models experienced explosive growth²⁶.

As we have seen, Lucas Faydherbe opted for an apprenticeship with a painter. It seems likely that he did this with the intention to become proficient in designing his own sculptures. If so, this was a calculated choice, for several of his colleagues seem to have been working after models made by painters. Maybe the fact that Rubens had already built a reputation in this matter, was a decisive factor when he made this decision. After all, throughout his career, Rubens frequently has made designs for both small-scale sculpture and monumental (architectural) sculpture.

The first sculptor for whom this form of cooperation is documented, in this instance related to monumental (architectural) sculpture, is Hans van Mildert (fig. 11)²⁷. Although van Mildert seems to have made occasionally designs for architectural sculpture himself, he repeatedly relied on designs by Rubens in his assignments²⁸. Whether this was the initiative of van Mildert himself, his patron or Rubens still re-



11. LUCAS VORSTERMAN (after Anthony Van Dyck). Portrait of Hans van Mildert (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-33.152).

mains unclear. The collaboration between Rubens and van Mildert has been documented from 1616 onwards. In that year van Mildert signs in Rubens' name a contract with the carpenter who will make two wooden stairs for the painter's home²⁹. It seems that van Mildert was a kind of superintendent of the renovations of Rubens' house. As far as the construction of the famous new porch that closed the courtyard is concerned, this is not at all surprising since this was a field in which the sculptor-architect himself was active. During the following year van Mildert indeed built the magnificent marble altarpiece frame for the high altar of the Brus-

²³ A. PAYNE 2014, pp. 58-59. In the inventory of the house of Erasmus II Quellinus also clay and wax models are mentioned. Cf. J.M. MULLER - F. HEALY - K. BELKIN 2004, p. 59.

²⁴ F. SKIBINSKI 2013, p. 95 (with further references).

²⁵ Cf. CASSEL 2014, pp. 15-16 & 103-129.

²⁶ V. HERREMANS, 2012, pp. 148-150.

²⁷ Hans "den Duytsch" van Mildert (1588-1638) was in some way an immigrant, as he was, like Rubens, the son of exiled reformist citizens of Antwerp. van Mildert's parents emigrated to Königsplatz, in former East Prussia. He joined the Antwerp Guild of Saint Luke in 1610 and lived in the immediate vicinity of Rubens at the Wapper. In 1615 Rubens became the godfather of one

of van Mildert's sons: Peter Paul van Mildert. Cf. E. DUVERGER, 1989, p. 391.

²⁸ His father was a painter and he personally made a model for the retable of the S. Gummarus altar in Lier of which we can assume it must have been a drawing. An archival source regarding the altar of S. Gummarus mentions that van Mildert made the model himself while being on site. "[...]den Borgemeester met 5 of 6 van den heeren van de magistraat te samen vergadert ten einde den meester zoude toonen zynen patroon den welken hy, alhier binnen de stad wezende, had geconcepieert, alwaer zy goed contentement in hadden [...]". M. CASTEELS 1974, p. 193.

²⁹ R. TIJS 1983, p. 96.

sels Kapellekerk after a design by Rubens³⁰. Twenty years later he did the same for the high altar of the church of the Antwerp Calced Carmelites (1637-1642)³¹.

As we know, Rubens' interests in the area of the *disegno* indeed extended towards architecture, more specifically the application of different elements of the architectural orders, for instance those applied to the decoration of an altarpiece, an epitaph or a building. This is illustrated by the well-known indignant letter he wrote to Archduke Albert concerning the high altar of the cathedral in Ghent after his design, including the altarpiece as well as the framing portico, was abandoned in favor of a model provided by the de Nole studio. In the latter Rubens' altarpiece was replaced by sculptures. Regarding the architectural frame, Rubens in general used the word *ornamento* when he referred to this kind of architectural decoration. He borrowed it from contemporary Italian artistic practice³². Rubens' designs in this matter, which also comprise frontispieces and ephemeral decorations, should be included in a contribution on Rubens' relationship to sculpture, because many of these designs have a strong sculptural character or include sculpture in the true sense of the word.

It also has become clear now that van Mildert was in possession of designs by Rubens, which he used at his own discretion. The inventory of the house of van Mildert's widow, for instance, mentions "*een schets van Rubbens van den altaer van de Vrouwenbroeders*"³³. Several designs for sculptures by Rubens which can be related to the church of the profession house of the Antwerp Jesuits were used by van Mildert for assignments elsewhere, such as the altar of the Triest chapel (1624-25) at the Ghent cathedral and the high altar of the Bruges cathedral (1627)³⁴. Also van Mildert's son Cornelis (†1667) seems to have made use of these models as is clearly illustrated by, for instance, the angels crowning his altar portico in Geel (1664-66) clearly derived from Rubensian prototypes³⁵.

It was not only in the work of his son Cornelis but also in the work of his son in law, Gerard van Opstal (1594, 1597 or 1604-1668) that we can find traces of Rubens (fig. 12)³⁶. Van Opstal was married to van Mildert's daughter Elisabeth. His ivory reliefs were highly appreciated and were collected by enthusiasts such as Louis XIV³⁷. Many of Van Opstal's ivory reliefs breathe Rubens' spirit, especially the typical children's bacchanals. In the case of the relief of the *Three Graces*, formerly held at the Royal Museums of Art and History Brussels³⁸,

and attributed to the sculptor, there is a close relationship with a remarkable grisaille painting by Rubens (Florence, Palazzo Pitti). However, the similarities are limited to the composition. The representation was not copied literally³⁹. Remarkably, in the inventory of van Mildert's widow a "*schets*" by Rubens where the same subject is being mentioned⁴⁰.

So, possibly, Van Opstal knew the Rubens models via the Van Mildert's. But it cannot be excluded that he met Rubens personally, since he spent a period in Antwerp while Rubens was still alive, before he left for Paris to start a prolific career⁴¹. Perhaps Van Opstal came in contact with Rubens because of an assignment. It is known that Rubens himself collected ivory cabinet pieces⁴². The inventory that was made after Rubens' death, mentions no less than seven ivory sculptures representing a *Crucifix*, a *Mercury*, a *Venus Pudica*, a salt cellar decorated with a *Sea Triumph with Nymphs and Tritons*, a *Children's dance*, a *Cupid and Psychè* and an *Adam and Eve*. The first six are being described as "*de l'invention de feu Mons. Rubens*".

Rubens was thus in possession of no less than six ivory cabinet pieces designed by himself. The name(s) of the executing artist(s) unfortunately is/are not mentioned in the *Specification*. However, attempts have been made to identify these sculptures. Three of them are – some more and others less convincingly – attributed to Lucas Faydherbe: a *Children's dance* in the Prado (fig. 13)⁴³, a *Venus Pudica* in the Fitzwilliam Museum⁴⁴ and a *Cupid and Psyche* in The State Hermitage Museum⁴⁵. Another three in turn are attributed to the German sculptor Georg Petel (1601/1602-1634) (fig. 14): a *Crucifix* in the Nationahistoriske Museum Frederiksborg Slot⁴⁶, a Salt cellar in the Royal Collection Stockholm and an *Adam and Eve* in the Rubenshuis⁴⁷. The State Hermitage Museum also holds a *Mercury* that has been associated with the one mentioned in the inventory⁴⁸. Petel seems to have been working more to designs by Rubens. Earlier, in 1626, Rubens already sold three sculptures by Petel to the Duke of Buckingham: a *Venus and Amor* (signed, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum)⁴⁹, the *Three graces*, and a *Flora* (present whereabouts not known). At least one of them, the representation of the *Three Graces (with a Basket of Roses)* of which a replica in gilded bronze is kept at the Boston Museum of Fine Art clearly is derived from a composition by Rubens (Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste)⁵⁰.

³⁰ V. HERREMANS 2008, pp. 148-149.

³¹ F. BAUDOUIN 1991, pp. 21-60.

³² V. HERREMANS 2013, pp. 267-268 & 271-272.

³³ E. DUVERGER 1989, p. 414.

³⁴ V. HERREMANS 2015b, pp. 63-64.

³⁵ J. VAN MEENSEL 1989, p. 25.

³⁶ M. BOUDON-MACHUEL 2005b, pp. 103-108; E. DUVERGER 1989, p. 399; E. MCGRATH 2016, p. 451.

³⁷ P. MALGOUYRES 2007, pp. 46-54.

³⁸ The sculpture was stolen in 1997.

³⁹ E. MCGRATH 2016, p. 451.

⁴⁰ E. DUVERGER 1989, pp. 387-414.

⁴¹ In 1635-36 he was registered as a master in the Antwerp Guild of St Luke. In 1638 he cooperated with Cornelis van Mildert at the funeral monument of

Jan Chanon in the church of the Antwerp Calced Carmelites (lost). Cf. M. CASTEELS 1974, p. 260.

⁴² E. MCGRATH 2016, p. 45; F. SCHOLTEN 2006, pp. 37-42.

⁴³ Inv. E-257. Convincingly monogrammed "LF". The presence of Pan however is not mentioned in the *Specification*.

⁴⁴ Inv. M.410-1985.

⁴⁵ Inv. E-12311. F. SCHOLTEN 2006, p. 41; MALINES 1997, cat. n. 12 & 14.

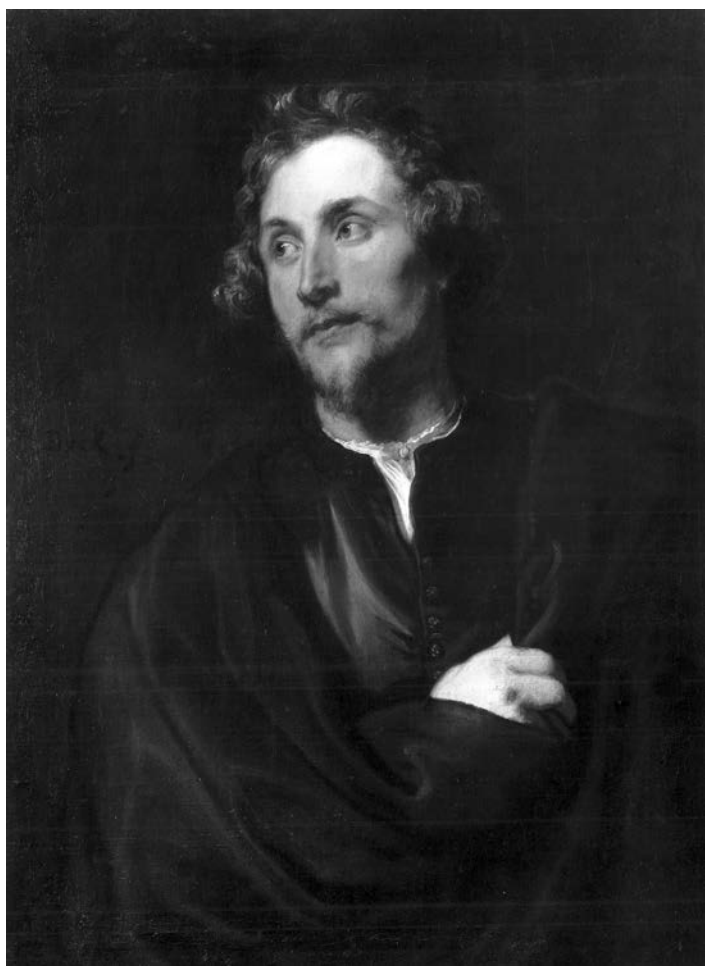
⁴⁶ Inv. B3959.

⁴⁷ Inv. RH.K.015.

⁴⁸ Inv. E 12262.

⁴⁹ Inv. WA1932.194.

⁵⁰ Inv. 1976.842, possibly molded by Georg Petel himself. E. MCGRATH 2016, p. 451.



12. LUCAS II FRANCHOYS. *Portrait of Gerard Van Opstal* (Versailles, Castle of Versailles and the Trianon, inv. MV8930).



14. ANTHONY VAN DYCK. *Portrait of Georg Petel* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, inv. 406).



13. LUCAS FAYDHERBE. *Children's Dance* (Madrid, Prado, inv. E00257).



15. PETER PAUL RUBENS. *Feast of Venus* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. GG 684).

The material and conceptual diversity of the “models”: a Reflection of Rubens’ theoretical Ideas and contemporary artistic Practice.

The material nature of what seems to be “models” by Rubens for executed sculpture is very diverse. The most remarkable and, at the same time, in a sense, the least logical are the finished paintings that are related to sculptures because they are works of art in their own right. We already mentioned the representation of *Three Graces (with a Basket of Roses)*, but there is also, for instance, the *Feast of Venus* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum) (fig. 15). Certainly, the latter painting, of which only parts of the composition were converted into sculpture, makes clear what the bottom line is: it is not the painting that was the model, but the “invention(s)” by Rubens, that was/were used as (a) model(s) for both the painting and the sculpture. Since *disegno* is the father of all arts, one and the same design can thus produce both painted and sculptured “descendants”.

There is yet another aspect of Rubens’ work, in which he illustrates his commitment to the idea of *disegno* as the father of all arts: his so-to-say “multimedia” designs, wherein painting, sculpture and architectural elements all have a place. It is the same idea that lies at the basis of this integrative view. From one design which is the basis for works belonging to

the various arts, it is only a small step to a design in which the different arts are already virtually present. From this perspective, it is also quite obvious that Rubens himself wanted to provide the designs for the frames, the architectural and sculptural “ornaments”, of his altarpieces and epitaphs.

But there is a big difference between the “virtual” reality of Rubens’ designs, which enabled him to think in different media and the real conditions in which works of art were created. In that respect there was a fundamental difference between artistic practice in Italy and in the Southern Netherlands, where various art practices institutionally were still merely separated. In practice, Rubens as a designer had thus to cope with the representatives of the other arts, sculptors and architects, which in most cases conceived their own designs. It is therefore not surprising that “multimedia” commands sometimes led to conflicts of interest between different providers of designs although it was ultimately the patron who had the last word. This is clear from the example of the high altar of the cathedral in Ghent mentioned earlier⁵¹.

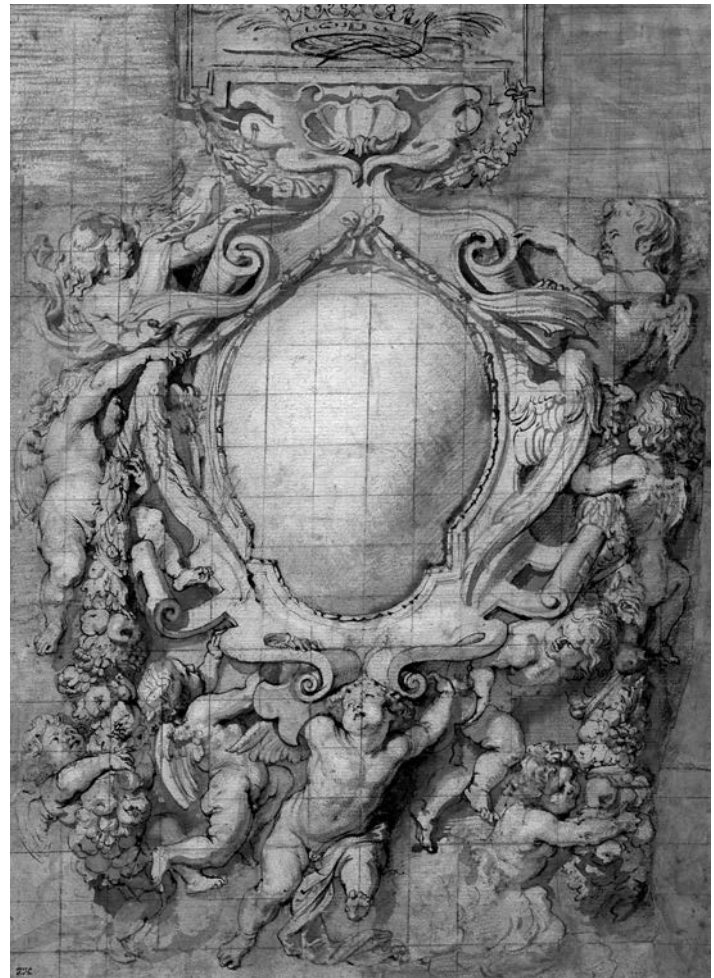
The degree to which Rubens was able to realize his “multimedial” inventions was thus strongly determined by the actual circumstances of the commission i.e. the degree to which he was able to take decisions regarding the conceptual di-

⁵¹ V. HERREMANS 2005, p. 184.

mension of a complex assignment. In some cases, such as the rebuilding and decoration of his house or the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*, it is certain that he had the final word⁵². In both examples we see that there is a thorough integration of the different arts, without any doubt due to Rubens' "generic" invention. In other cases, the integration reaches an equally high level because of the close cooperation with an artist executing the parts of the assignment belonging to another art than painting and when Rubens seems to have been able to convince the commissioner to use his invention for the whole assignment. These are, for instance, the altar retables executed in cooperation with Hans Van Mildert for the Brussels Kapellekerk and the Antwerp Calced Carmelites church (fig. 16). And finally, there are the assignments in which individual inventions by Rubens destined for parts of a "mul-



16. PETER PAUL RUBENS. *The Glorification of the Eucharist*. Design for the high altar retable of the Antwerp Calced Carmelites (probably c. 1630; New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 37.160.12).



17. PETER PAUL RUBENS. *Design for a sculpted Medallion on the Façade of the Antwerp Jesuit Church* (c. 1621; London, The British Museum, inv. AN192153001).

timedial" realization are being used. This was the case at the Jesuit church in Antwerp: here Rubens designed, apart from several altarpieces, the ceiling paintings (and executed them together with his workshop), and different parts of the internal and external sculptural and architectural decoration (fig. 17)⁵³. In this case Rubens was on good terms with the patrons, the Jesuit fathers, as well as with one of the executors of the (architectural) sculpture, once again Hans Van Mildert. Nevertheless, there are no indications that this megalomaniac project in some way was "directed" by Rubens. This also applies to the Our Lady Chapel which is frequently cited in this context. Although Rubens certainly is the author of designs for different aspects, the chapel in fact resulted from different campaigns and the general "high baroque" impression the whole decoration certainly gives is rather the result of an extended genesis in several phases. We have no indications that it is the result of one integral design⁵⁴.

⁵² Rubens was commissioned to make designs for all triumphal arches and stages, to assume responsibility for all the paintings and to organize the execution performed by painters and sculptors. J.R. MARTIN 1972, pp. 26 & 30.

⁵³ V. HERREMANS 2015, pp. 53-75.

⁵⁴ From 1621 onwards, the chapel and its interior were constructed in different phases. The last campaign took place in 1639-40. Rubens delivered several de-

signs for parts of the interior decoration of which the drawing for the ceiling is the most famous (Vienna, Graphische Sammlungen Albertina). As Rubens also elsewhere delivered designs for an altarpiece comprising the architectural and sculptural frame, the possibility that he did so here cannot be excluded. For a summary regarding the chronology, http://balat.kikirpa.be/doc/pdf/DB_barokke_retabels_57164.pdf



18. PETER PAUL RUBENS. *Design for the Sculpture of Saint Norbert crowning the high Altarpiece of the Antwerp Abbey of Saint Michael* (c. 1624?; oil on panel, cm 46,6 × 66,8; private collection).

The inventions Rubens delivered for these assignments take different forms: drawings or oil sketches. In light of the different stages of Rubens' creative process in general, a drawing most likely represented an earlier stage in the genesis of a "model". In several a particular place is taken by the painted models, the oil sketches (fig. 18). Following his teacher Otto van Veen (1556-1629), but also Federico Barocci (1528-1612), oil sketches took a very important place in the creative process of Rubens⁵⁵. Like Barocci, Rubens made sketches representing the colors (*bozzetti per i colori*) or the lighting effects (*bozzetti per i lumi*). It is to this latter, rather monochrome, technique that the models for sculpture are related. In his "multimedia" designs Rubens distinguished sculptural parts by using color for the others and combin-

ing both techniques. To represent white (marble) sculpture he commonly uses a grayish ground, bluish or ochre tones to indicate the lighter shadows and brown or dark grey to designate the darker shadows, all of this lavishly finished with white highlights. In his finished paintings Rubens uses a similar palette to differentiate representations of sculpture from the representation of "real" figures. So this is the way Rubens, according to his own theoretical insights, represents sculptures as if they were "softened into living flesh".

Conclusion

When after his stay in Italy Rubens settled back in Antwerp in 1608, Southern Netherlandish sculpture stood at the beginning of a new era. Thanks to progressive sculptors who saw sculpture as a free art, the ancient conservative institutional circumstances changed favorably. Rubens' art theoretical concepts encompassed in the first place a great admiration for sculpture, which held an important position in the training of painters through the *topos* of *imitatio*. The main role here was played by ancient sculpture, but also works of some contemporary sculptors could count on Rubens' interest. However, Rubens also was convinced that painting offered more opportunities in the representation of momentous, idiosyncratic aspects of nature such as human incarnate.

The thread running through the intensive contacts that Rubens had with sculptors was the importance of *disegno*, described by Vasari as "the common father of painting and sculpture". This rationale also formed the basis of Rubens' integrative vision of the arts that clearly was expressed in his designs for frontispieces, ephemeral decorations, but also, for example, altar retables. Despite the developments that the status of sculpture already had undergone, the fundamental theoretical element of *disegno*, both in training and in sculpture practice, in the Southern Netherlands, was still largely lacking.

It is here that Rubens' contribution to the art of sculpture should be positioned. Faydherbe entered apprenticeship with Rubens to become proficient in this common basis both their arts shared. Some of Rubens' "inventions" were therefore executed as a painting as well as a sculpture. Both Rubens' integrative vision of design practice and his designs themselves exerted a great influence on style development of Southern Netherlandish sculpture. They were essential for the development of the so called "high Baroque" sculpture of the end of the 17th and 18th century when, eventually and to a certain degree, an integration of painting, sculpture and architecture was achieved.

⁵⁵ J. WOOD 2011, vol. 1, p. 121.