

Heads on Shoulders | Portrait Busts in the Low Countries 1600 - 1800

12 SEPTEMBER – 14 DECEMBER 2008

This autumn, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp is presenting *Heads on Shoulders. Portrait Busts in the Low Countries 1600-1800*, the first exhibition on monumental Baroque sculpture since 1977, the International Rubens Year.

Like many South Netherlandish painters (Rubens, Van Dyck, Jordaens), the Baroque sculptors from the Low Countries enjoyed a fame that extended across Europe.

The undisputed master of Baroque sculpture in the Low Countries was Artus Quellinus I (1609-1668). Originally from Antwerp, Quellinus spent many years of his life in the Northern Netherlands, where he not only deeply influenced the flourishing genre of portrait sculpture, but also executed the noted sculptural decorations on the town hall of Amsterdam – a milestone in the history of Netherlandish art. The exhibition will feature five portraits by Quellinus, including from the collections of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and the Louvre, that provide a unique insight into his exceptional artistry.

Equally as important is the work of François Duquesnoy (1597-1643). The Duquesnoy family from Brussels is best known for the world-famous Manneken Pis statue (1619). Few people are aware that François Duquesnoy,

a descendant of this family of artists, established himself in Italy where he acquired fame under the name *il Fiammingo* (the Fleming) and eventually became one of the most successful Baroque sculptors, alongside Bernini. The Duquesnoy family is represented in the exhibition by a sublime portrait of Bishop Antonius Triest (1577), a patron from Ghent. This work is quite illustrative of the influence of Italian portrait art in the Low Countries.



WALLERANT VAILLANT, *A Young Artist*, KMSKA

The starting point of the exhibition is the bust as a genre. It focuses first and foremost on so-called portrait busts. Political figures and dignitaries are a traditional theme in portrait art. But politicians, scholars and aristocrats were not the only ones to be depicted. By the end of the 18th century, famous actresses, too, were commonly immortalised in marble.

In addition to busts as representative images or commemorative portraits, the exhibition explores other interesting aspects and functions. Ample attention is paid to Classical Antiquity, which very much stamped its mark on the genre, not only as a source of inspiration for patrons and collectors, but also for the sculptors themselves. The significance of casts and copies of Antique sculptures as study objects, and the characteristic attributes in self-portraits, are illustrated by means of examples of such items.

Finally, the meaning and purpose of busts in the Early Modern Era is elucidated with examples of paintings, engravings and drawings by, among others, Peter Paul Rubens.

This exhibition is organised in association with the Flemish Art Collection, a structural partnership between the Groeninge Museum in Bruges, the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent and the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp.

The scenography by Koen Van Syngel, in the vaults of the museum building, makes for a splendid introduction to the virtuosity of these Baroque sculptors.



ARTUS QUELLINUS I, *Andries de Graeff*, RIJKSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM



ANONYMOUS, *Antique Heads*, STEDELIJK PRENTENKABINET ANTWERPEN

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OPENING TIMES

OPEN: TUE-SAT: 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.; SUN: 10 A.M. - 6 P.M.
CLOSED: MON.
ACCESS AND FACILITIES FOR THE DISABLED

ADMISSION FEE

€ 8: INDIVIDUAL VISITORS
€ 6: GROUPS (MIN. 15 PERS.), STUDENTS, 60+
€ 1: EVERYONE BETWEEN 18 AND 26
FREE: EVERYONE AGED UP TO AND INCLUDING 18

PLUS

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION WITH A GUIDE

€ 50 + ADMISSION: MAX. 20 PERS.

INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS: T +32 (0)3 242 04 16, F +32 (0)3 248 08 10,
publiekswerking@kmska.be

PUBLICATION

HEADS ON SHOULDERS. PORTRAIT BUSTS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES 1600-1800,
UITGEVERIJ SNOECK (NL/ENG, 192 P., € 39)



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Governor of the Habsburg Netherlands, KMSKA



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