

DATE: Friday, June 23, 2006
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PREMIERE PRESENTATION



Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577-1640) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (Flemish, 1568-1625)
The Return from War: Mars Disarmed by Venus, about 1610-1612
Oil on panel
127.3 x 163.5 cm (50 1/8 x 64 3/8 in.)
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California, acquired in honor of John Walsh. 2000.68

**EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE
PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGES AND CLOSE
FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO GREAT
17th-CENTURY MASTERS**

Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship
At the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty
Center, July 5-September 24, 2006

LOS ANGELES—One of the greatest artistic partnerships in history—between Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625)—will be explored in *Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship*, at the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Center, July 5–September 24, 2006. This Premiere Presentation is the first major international loan exhibition devoted to the collaborative works of Rubens and Brueghel, and is one of the J. Paul Getty Museum's most important shows of the year. It will feature the largest group of paintings by the two 17th-century masters ever seen together, examining their professional partnership, personal friendship, and unique collaborative process.

Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship has been organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis. Following its showing at

-more-

the Getty Center in Los Angeles, the exhibition will be presented at the Mauritshuis, The Hague, Netherlands, from October 21, 2006–January 28, 2007.

Rubens and Brueghel were the preeminent painters in Antwerp, and the unique alliance they forged was an exceptional partnership of equals. Together, they produced approximately 25 works between about 1598 and Brueghel's death in 1625. This exhibition brings together over a dozen of their greatest collaborations, including their earliest known joint work *The Battle of the Amazons* (about 1598-1600), on loan from the Schloss Sanssouci, Potsdam, Germany, and exhibited for the first time in the United States. Among other highlights are the J. Paul Getty Museum's *The Return from War: Mars Disarmed by Venus* (1610–12); *The Garden of Eden with the Fall of Man* (1617), on loan from the Mauritshuis; *The Feast of Acheloüs* (about 1614–15) from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and *The Allegory of Taste* (1618) from the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain. The exhibition offers insight into the nature of artistic partnerships and reveals new information about the collaborative process—a special section displays X-ray and infrared images that reveal the striking revisions Rubens made to his partner's work during its execution.

"By exploring this great artistic collaboration, the exhibition provides a better understanding of how these two dynamic artists with disparate styles worked closely in an unusual partnership whereby one did not necessarily dominate the other," says Michael Brand, Director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "The nature of these two painters' working relationship was not fully understood until the team of curators and conservators at the Getty Museum and the Mauritshuis began to look closely at these works, using technical analysis to help reveal the complex and reciprocal approach employed by Rubens and Brueghel."

While collaboration was a common practice in 17th-century Netherlands, such jointly-produced works between two or more artists with particular specialties were largely practical arrangements, in which one artist engaged a colleague or worked with the help of assistants in order to produce paintings at a faster pace. Rubens' and Brueghel's partnership, however, was a conceptual one, in which both men contributed their ideas, expertise, and vision. They shared a creative energy conveyed

through energetic and distinctive brushwork. Jan Brueghel the Elder was a master of landscapes and still lifes, who preferred to work on a smaller scale, while Rubens specialized in large religious and historical figurative subjects. Occasionally, when working together, they even exchanged specialties, with Rubens painting animals in the *Garden of Eden with the Fall of Man* (1617), while Brueghel borrowed Rubens' animal motifs. Their joint works unite the strengths of each artist, producing new subjects and compositions celebrated by their contemporaries.

Until recently, it was often assumed that Rubens dominated these shared ventures, but studies carried out by Getty curators, conservators, and colleagues from other museums around the world suggest that the two men were equal partners. Close technical examination of the J. Paul Getty Museum's *The Return from War: Mars Disarmed by Venus* (1610–12) using X-radiography and infrared reflectography reveals that Rubens painted over Brueghel's finished work, redefining the composition and altering the subject. But other evidence reveals further steps taken by Brueghel in the last phase of painting to integrate their contributions, indicating that the two artists had an amicable working method. Partners by choice, they accommodated each other's preferences and modified each other's contributions. The works on display are a testament to their close friendship, which was free of rancorous rivalry despite the demands of patrons at court.

Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship also includes important examples of Rubens' and Brueghel's works produced with other Flemish contemporaries such as Hendrick van Balen (1574/75–1632) and Frans Snyders (1579–1657).

The exhibition is curated by Anne T. Woollett, associate curator of paintings, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and Ariane van Suchtelen, curator, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis.

RELATED EXHIBITION

Rubens and His Printmakers

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Center, July 5–September 24, 2006

Peter Paul Rubens employed a small army of artists to make prints after his most successful paintings, drawings, and tapestry designs, thus increasing his fame throughout Europe. This exhibition explores the close working relationship between Rubens and his printmakers, elucidating a fascinating aspect of artistic collaboration.

#

Note to editors: Images available on request.

MEDIA CONTACT: Miranda Carroll
Getty Communications Dept.
310-440-6427
mcarroll@getty.edu

The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that features the Getty Conservation Institute, the Getty Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and the Getty Research Institute. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

Visiting the Getty Center:

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Monday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$7. No reservation required. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. For more information, call 310-440-7300 (English or Spanish); 310-440-7305 (TTY line for the deaf or hearing impaired).

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu.

Sign up for e-Getty at www.getty.edu/subscribe to receive free monthly highlights of events at the Getty Center and the Getty Villa via e-mail, or visit www.getty.edu for a complete calendar of public programs.