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Shorter Notices

Seventeenth-Century Flemish

Rubens (Museo Nacional del Prado. Guías de la Colección), Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2010. 61 pp, 91 color illus. ISBN 978-84-84 802-11-2.

Rubens. The Spectacle of Life. In English, Spanish and French. Published by the Museo Nacional del Prado, CEEH (Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica) and playable in all regions. (DVD High Definition Video; DVD PAL; All Regions). ISBN 978-84-93816-20-9.

From November 2010 until January 2011, the Prado exhibited all of its 90 paintings and oil sketches by Rubens to proudly show the public the extent of their rich holdings (give or take a few due to attribution questions). Some were painted with assistance from the Rubens studio, or in collaborations with Jan Brueghel the Elder, Frans Snyders, Anthony van Dyck, Paul Bril, Jan Wildens and Jacob Jordaens. The Prado today owns the largest Rubens collection in the world because Rubens was King Philip IV's favorite painter; late in life, the artist furnished numerous paintings for the king's palaces in and around Madrid. Thanks to these royal commissions the quality of the Prado's Rubens paintings is very high.

The exhibition was accompanied by a small gratis guide, *Rubens*, without illustrations and published in Spanish, English and French, which unfortunately went out of print already during the exhibition, despite the fact that some 300,000 were printed. Due to the strong interest in a publication about the Rubens holdings in the Prado, the museum published an illustrated guide in the *Guías de la Colección* series - in Spanish only - to serve the public. It is the most up-to-date and highly affordable (euros 13.50) catalogue of all of Rubens's works in the Prado. Written by Alejandro Vergara, Senior Curator of Flemish paintings and the Northern Schools, and José Juan Pérez Preciado, the publication begins with a brief biography of Rubens. The following short texts to the first fifty-five Rubens and Rubens school paintings include the most recent attributions, i.e. Rubens, Rubens school, collaborators, dates, support and measurements, and the Prado inventory number. The texts also inform about the works' provenances and previous locations, for example the Alcázar. All are illustrated in good color reproductions, including a few details. The remaining thirty-six paintings are reproduced still in color but very much smaller and without text. They include just the basic information about artist, date, support, measurements, and Prado inventory number.

The Prado also published a 50-minute long DVD, *Rubens. The Spectacle of Life* (euros 16.00). Produced by Angular Producciones under the direction of Miguel Ángel Trujillo

in Spanish, English and French, it is described as a documentary that "invites us to travel to his world." Narrated by Alejandro Vergara the DVD includes - among others - conversations with Fiona Healy (the Rubens House), Arthur Wheelock (on Rubens's paintings in the National Gallery, Washington), Nico van Hout (on Rubens's painting techniques), and Juan Bordes on sculpture. Throughout, a female voice reads from Rubens's letters. The DVD includes numerous close-ups of the Prado's Rubens paintings.

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