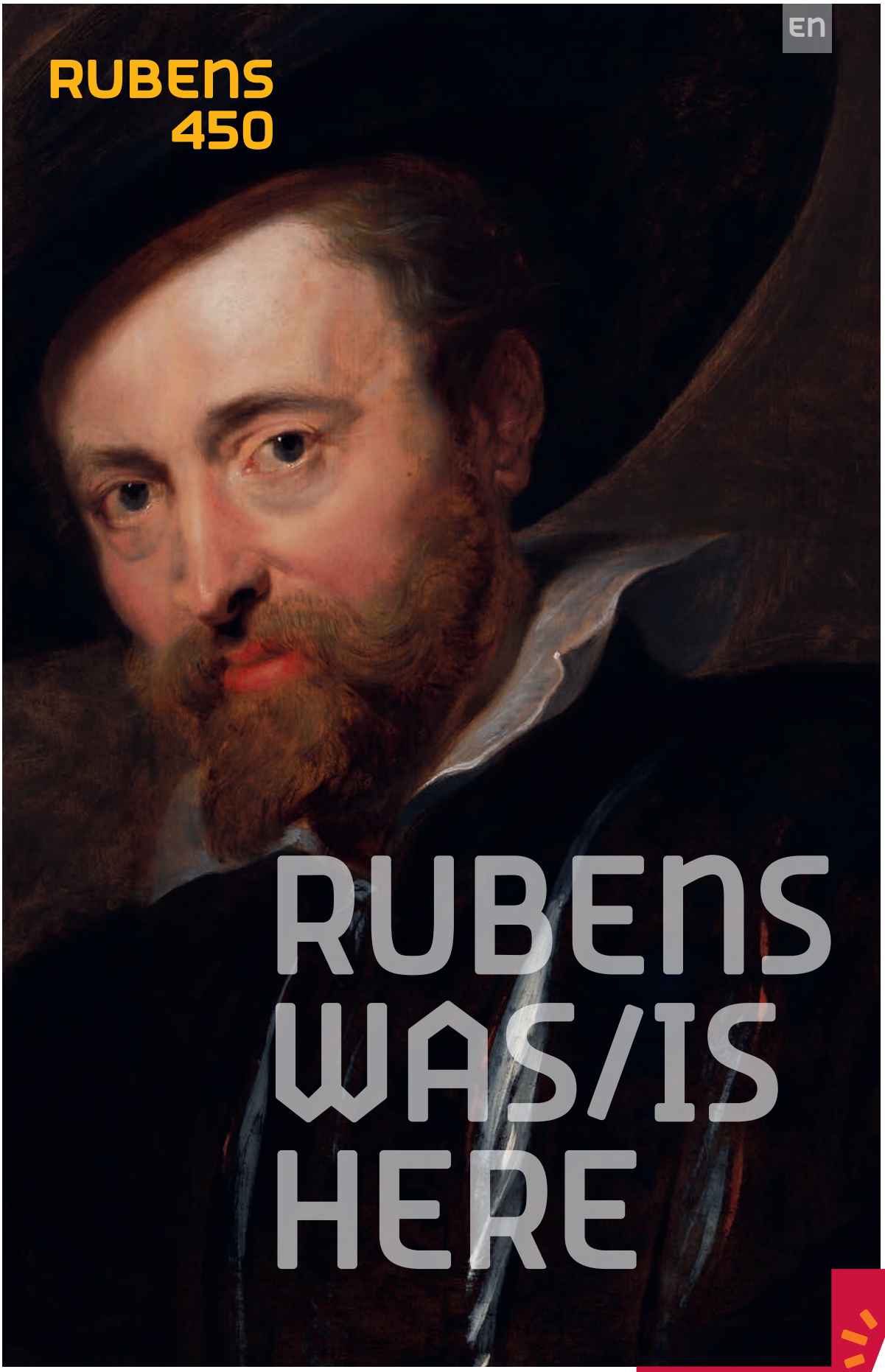
RUBENS 450

EN



RUBENS WAS/IS HERE

Flanders
State of the Art

Antwerp, all yours



Adoration of the Magi, P.P. Rubens, KMSKA

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Rubens Experience, Rubenshuis

1. CELEBRATE 450 YEARS OF RUBENS IN ANTWERP

In 2027, Antwerp will celebrate the 450th anniversary of Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). The city where this master of the Baroque lived and worked preserves an exceptionally rich legacy of his life and work. From his city palace, where he created his masterpieces, to the monumental paintings in Antwerp's churches and the collections in Antwerp's museums: nowhere can you get to know Rubens better than in Antwerp.

Rubens was much more than just an influential painter. He ran a successful studio, maintained contacts with the European elite, undertook diplomatic missions and raised a family in the city that inspired him. His work has been touring the world for centuries, but Antwerp remains the place where his story comes to life.

With exhibitions, special events and new ways to experience his work, the city invites visitors to rediscover Rubens. For 450 years after his birth, as well as being one of the greatest figures in art history, he is also an enduring source of inspiration for Antwerp.



Snijders&Rockoxhuis



The Descent from the Cross, P.P. Rubens, Cathedral of Our Lady



Studio Rubens, KSMKA

2. RUBENS 450: THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNIVERSARY YEAR

In 2027, Antwerp will celebrate the 450th anniversary of Peter Paul Rubens with exhibitions, concerts and new cultural events. Here are some of the highlights of the anniversary year.

RUBENS AND THE WORLD

KMSKA | 9 October 2027 – 16 January 2028

Iconic works by Rubens interacting with objects from all corners of the globe. The exhibition highlights how international influences helped shape his art.

RUBENS EXPERIENCE

KMSKA | until summer 2027

In the Rubens Hall, visitors can follow the restoration of *The Adoration of the Magi* up close. The restoration will be completed in the summer of 2027, as part of Rubens 450.

OUT OF RUBENS' SHADOW: FORGOTTEN MASTERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Museum Plantin-Moretus
27 March – 27 June 2027

Discover prints by Rubens' predecessors, contemporaries and successors, and make acquaintance with the artists who helped shape the artistic landscape of his time.

RUBENS' LOST NOTEBOOKS

Snijders&Rockoxhuis
30 September 2027 – 13 January 2028

Discover the hidden inner world of the Baroque master through exceptional copies of his legendary, lost notebook.

MEETING RUBENS

Contemporary art
in four monumental churches in Antwerp
25 September 2027 – 30 January 2028

Contemporary artists, including Berlinde De Bruyckere, Tracey Emin and Luc Tuymans, engage in a dialogue with Rubens and his work in four historic locations.

RUBENS IN MUSIC

Cathedral of Our Lady | 18 June 2027

The Antwerp Symphony Orchestra is performing a new cantata by Bohdana Frolyak, inspired by the four Rubens paintings in the cathedral, alongside music by Lodewijk De Vocht.

THE CABINET SESSIONS

Rubenshuis
5 March, 26 June, 24 September and 3 December 2027

The Innovator in Rubens comes to life over four Friday evenings at Rubenshuis, featuring innovative music, fascinating talks and remarkable workshops.
Be sure to make a note of the special birthday edition on 26 June.

RUBENS STREET ART

Antwerp city centre | 2027 and beyond

New street art inspired by Rubens give his artistic legacy a contemporary place in Antwerp's streetscape.
The works will remain in the city even after 2027.

You can also discover Rubens' work all year round in Antwerp's museums, churches and historic buildings. With new tourist activities spread across the city, his story is also being showcased outside the exhibition halls.

Finally, after almost sixty years of research, the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard has been completed: a monumental scholarly survey of Rubens's oeuvre in more than seventy volumes, which confirms Antwerp's status as an international centre for Rubens research.



The Cabinet Sessions, Rubenshuis


Rubenshuis


Rubenshuis


Rubenshuis

3. RUBENS WAS HERE: WELCOME TO RUBENS' ANTWERP

Peter Paul Rubens and Antwerp are inextricably linked. The painter lived and worked in the city, built up an impressive network there, and left behind an artistic legacy that is still visible today. In churches, museums and historic buildings, you'll discover not only his masterpieces, but also the world in which he lived. From his former home to the places where he met friends and carried out commissions: Antwerp offers a unique insight into the life and work of Rubens.

MUST SEES

RUBENSHUIS

In his twenties, Rubens travelled around Italy, where he drew inspiration from Italian Renaissance art. In 1608, he returned to Antwerp and, a year later, bought a house with land on the Wapper. He turned it into an Italian palazzo, with a colourful Baroque garden. This is where he lived, worked and ran his business. He operated his studio there and welcomed clients and guests from home and abroad.

Today, Rubenshuis is the perfect starting point to get to know the artist. The artist residence will remain closed for renovation work until at least 2030, but at Rubens Experience you can discover his life and work through an audiovisual presentation and interactive elements. You'll also come face to face with his famous self-portrait.

The Baroque garden is well worth a visit too. Rubens immortalised his garden in some of his world-famous paintings. Stroll amongst 22,000 plants and discover the portico and the pavilion: the only surviving examples of Rubens' architectural work in the world.

CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY

The Cathedral of Our Lady, the largest Gothic church in the Low Countries, is one of Antwerp's icons. Behind the impressive Gothic architecture lies a rich Baroque interior, featuring, among other things, four masterpieces by Rubens: *The Elevation of the Cross*, *The Descent from the Cross*, *The Resurrection of Christ* and *The Assumption of the Virgin Mary*.

Rubens created two of these works for the very place where you can still admire them today. This allows you to experience his paintings not only as works of art, but also within the historical context in which they were created.

The statue of Rubens stands on Groenplaats, near the cathedral. In this way, the painter remains a prominent feature in the cityscape.

OTHER MONUMENTAL CHURCHES

The Baroque Saint Charles Borromeo Church on Hendrik Conscienceplein is also known as the Rubens Church. Rubens helped design the tower and the façade and played a key role in the church's decoration. His involvement with the high altar and his altarpiece *The Return of the Holy Family* make it clear just how closely painting and architecture were intertwined during the Baroque period. This makes the church a special place in which to discover Rubens' versatility.

Saint James' Church, a stop on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, is where you'll find the burial chapel of Rubens and his family. Above the altar hangs a painting of *The Madonna Adored by Saints*. You will also find the sculpture *Madonna of Sorrows*, created by Lucas Faydherbe, a pupil and friend of Rubens.

Saint Paul's Church, with its blend of Gothic and Baroque styles, houses a rich collection of works of art by Flemish masters. Rubens is represented there with works including *The Flagellation* and *Adoration of the Shepherds*.

Saint Paul's Church is currently being restored. As a result, some works are temporarily unavailable for viewing. From autumn 2027, all the works will be on display there once again.

MUSEUM PLANTIN-MORETUS

At Museum Plantin-Moretus, you'll travel back in time to the world of the

Plantin-Moretus family, as printers and publishers who played a significant role in Antwerp's cultural life. In the house and studio, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, there are, amongst other things, historic printing presses, living quarters preserved as they were in the past, an art collection and pioneering books from centuries ago.

As a close friend, intellectual kindred spirit and business partner of Balthasar I Moretus, Rubens was a frequent visitor here. Discover how Rubens' portraits and paintings helped shape this house, and how his book illustrations contributed to the luxurious Baroque books that were distributed from here across the world. This will help you get to know Rubens even better as a versatile designer within a fascinating Antwerp network.

Museum Plantin-Moretus is currently closed for renovation work and will reopen on Saturday 5 December 2026.

KMSKA

The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA) presents a rich collection of paintings by Peter Paul Rubens. His monumental masterpieces form an important part of the museum's collection.

The collection includes numerous altarpieces from churches in Antwerp. During the period of French rule, various works of art were taken to France. After the Battle of Waterloo, they were returned and added to the museum's collection.

In the magnificent Rubens Hall, you can admire some of his absolute masterpieces, including *Le Coup de Lance*, *The Enthroned Madonna Adored by Saints*, and *Adoration of the Magi*. The paintings demonstrate Rubens' versatility and his ability to bring religious stories to life through drama, movement and colour.

Since September 2023, in Rubens Experience, in the centre of the Rubens Hall, the KMSKA has been restoring two monumental altarpieces by Peter Paul Rubens. Following *The Enthroned Madonna Adored by Saints*, *The Adoration of the Magi* has been on display since September 2025. Visitors can watch the conservators at work up close and gain an insight into the scientific research carried out during the conservation process. The restoration of *The Adoration of the Magi* will be completed in the summer of 2027.

MORE TO EXPLORE

You'll also find traces of Rubens away from the best-known museums and churches. There are more places of interest in Antwerp that house his paintings or commemorate important moments in his life.

At Snijders&Rockoxhuis, you can explore two historic houses on Keizerstraat in Antwerp: the homes of Mayor Nicolaas Rockox (1560–1640) and the painter Frans Snijders (1579–1657). Both were in Rubens' circle of friends. The historic interiors and art collections provide an insight into cultural life in Antwerp in the seventeenth century. Among other things, you can admire Rubens' oil sketch *Christ on the Cross* and the painting *Virgin Mary in Adoration before the Sleeping Infant Jesus*.

The collection also includes works by Antoon van Dyck, Jacob Jordaens and Frans Snijders.

Inside the late-Gothic Saint Andrew's Church you can admire a remarkable interior with colourful stained-glass windows, a striking pulpit and the monument to Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. Rubens also has a link with this church: it was here that his two eldest children were baptised.

Along the redeveloped Scheldt quays, the excavated remains of Saint Michael's Abbey recall a significant moment in Rubens' personal life. It was here that he married his first wife, Isabella Brant. His painting *Adoration of the Magi*, which can now be seen at the KMSKA, was originally intended for the abbey.

On display in Saint Willibrord's Church in Antwerp North is *Saint Willibrord in Veneration of the Holy Family*, a painting by Rubens dating from around 1631.


Snijders&Rockoxhuis


Rubenshuis


KMSKA


KMSKA

4. RUBENS IS HERE: THE PROGRAMME FOR RUBENS 450, THE ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Rubens is not just a figure from the past. His work and ideas continue to inspire artists and creators, and his presence can still be felt in Antwerp. Throughout the anniversary year in 2027, you'll discover the master from new perspectives: through international exhibitions, special events, music, contemporary art and new activities around the city.

From his artistic network and view of the world to the creative energy in Antwerp today: Rubens 450 brings the past and the present together.

MUST SEES

RUBENS AND THE WORLD

KMSKA | 9 October 2027 - 16 January 2028

For a fresh perspective on Rubens, head to Rubens and the World at the KMSKA, an exhibition organised in collaboration with the Rubenshuis. It shows how Rubens drew inspiration from models, materials, animals and costumes from different continents. At the same time, you'll discover works of art from other cultures that can be traced back to Rubens' prints, which were distributed around the world from Antwerp.

The result is a surprising account of early modern globalisation and the interplay between Rubens and the world he depicted.

To mark the exhibition, contemporary artist Adrian Ghenie will present a monumental work in the Rubens Hall.

OUT OF RUBENS' SHADOW: FORGOTTEN MASTERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Museum Plantin-Moretus
27 March - 27 June 2027

The Plantin-Moretus family held a rich collection of prints by the finest woodcutters and copper engravers who worked for the publishing house. The museum continues this tradition and collects masterpieces by renowned artists and promising young graphic artists, both past and present.

Recently acquired historical drawings by Antwerp artists will be exhibited to the public for the first time in 2027. In Out of Rubens' Shadow: Forgotten masters in the spotlight, you'll discover prints by Rubens' predecessors, contemporaries and artists who were inspired by him. The exhibition shows how artists influenced one another and how Rubens was part of a much broader artistic narrative.

500 YEARS OF ORTELIUS

Museum Plantin-Moretus
30 October 2027 - 30 January 2028

In 1570, the Antwerp cartographer Abraham Ortelius published his Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, a work regarded as the first modern atlas. It became a milestone in the history of cartography.

Using maps and other historical documents, you'll discover how Ortelius depicted the world. The exhibition takes you into the world in which Rubens grew up and lived.

RUBENS' LOST NOTEBOOKS

Snijders&Rockoxhuis
30 September 2027 - 13 January 2028

At the Snijders&Rockoxhuis, you'll discover the world of two of Rubens' friends: Mayor Nicolaas Rockox and the painter Frans Snijders. Their homes house a remarkable collection of paintings, sculptures and works of art.

The exhibition Rubens' Lost Notebooks offers an intimate glimpse into the artist's inner world. Through exceptional copies of his lost notebook, you will discover Rubens as never before: as a thinker, a researcher and a visionary.

MEETING RUBENS

Contemporary art in four monumental churches in Antwerp
25 September 2027 - 30 January 2028

What happens when contemporary artists interact with Rubens? In Meeting Rubens, four monumental churches, centuries of art history and contemporary creations come together in a unique walking route.

Curated by Geukens & De Vil Projects, Antwerp invites contemporary artists to engage with Rubens and the themes that concerned him. The participating artists include Berlinde De Bruyckere, Tracey Emin, Sofie Muller, Luc Tuymans, James Lee Byars and Bill Viola.

The route connects Cathedral of Our Lady, Saint Paul's Church, Saint James' Church and Saint Charles Borromeo Church. Along the way, you'll discover how historical works of art and contemporary perspectives can both complement and challenge one another.

MURALS: RUBENS STREET ART

Rubens continues to be inspiring, even beyond museums and churches. In 2027, new street art works inspired by the great master, his life and his oeuvre will appear in Antwerp city centre. The murals bring his artistic legacy to life in the streets and allow you to discover Rubens from a contemporary perspective. The works will remain on display even after 2027.


Museum Plantin-Moretus



The Cabinet Sessions, Rubenshuis



The Cabinet Sessions, Rubenshuis



The Cabinet Sessions, Rubenshuis

MORE TO EXPLORE

CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY

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The Cathedral of Our Lady is a remarkable place to experience Rubens' work. On 18 June 2027, the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra will bring the world of the great master to life through music.

Composer Bohdana Frolyak has written a new cantata whose music creates a dialogue between the four Rubens paintings in the cathedral. This will be followed by the Choral Symphony by Lodewijk De Vocht, former cathedral choirmaster and a composer deeply rooted in Antwerp's musical history.

THE CABINET SESSIONS AT THE RUBENSHUIS

The Rubenshuis also welcomes contemporary artists. During The Cabinet Sessions

on Friday evenings, you'll find a programme featuring performances, lectures and workshops. Artists are given the space to create, experiment and present new work at the Rubens Experience and in the beautifully illuminated garden.

In 2027, too, the sessions will offer a fascinating insight into Rubens' world and the creative energy in Antwerp today. Be sure to put 25 June in your diary, as the extra-special edition of The Cabinet Sessions during Rubens' birthday weekend.

LECTURES | RUBENSHUIS

March, June, September and December 2027

Four lectures on Rubens, delivered by enthusiastic narrators. Each of them sheds light on a lesser-known aspect of the artist and his life. Take a seat and hear about Rubens from a surprising perspective.

Rubens Tour | Museum Plantin-Moretus

Rubens was a close friend of the Moretus family and a regular visitor to their home. On the new Rubens tour, you'll follow in his footsteps through the historic printer's house and discover how his work and network were linked to Antwerp's printing world.
You'll also find a Rubens tour in the museum's new visitor app.

GUIDED TOURS | RUBENSHUIS

For individuals

Keen for a glimpse inside the life of Rubens? Find out more about the architecture behind the old and new façades of the Rubenshuis? Fancy browsing through some old books? Want to unravel the mysteries of the museum garden? Join a guided tour of the Rubenshuis.

For groups

Come to the Rubenshuis with your friends, family or colleagues. Choose one of the four guided tours and create some lasting memories together. Tip: the garden is at its best from April to early October.

YOGA SESSIONS

Rubenshuis | from April 2027

Rubens enjoyed relaxing amongst his flowers and plants. You too? From April 2027, join the Sunday yoga sessions in the museum garden.

RUBENS IN THE CITY

In the autumn of 2026, Antwerp launched an open call for the tourism sector. Tourism enterprises are invited to develop new products, events and activities that enable visitors to discover the city through Rubens' eyes.

Throughout the anniversary year, there are all kinds of opportunities to do this: with a wine tasting based on Rubens' favourites, a Rubens-themed menu in a restaurant, a digital city walk or a cycling route focusing on Rubens as an architect.

In this way, Rubens 450 is not just a story from the past, but also an invitation to enjoy a new experience in Antwerp.

CORPUS RUBENIANUM

The most comprehensive scholarly survey of Rubens's oeuvre

Rubens's extraordinary works in a single, comprehensive overview: that's the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard. After almost sixty years, it is finally complete. No other city in the world has ever matched Antwerp's achievement: producing such a comprehensive and academically rigorous catalogue of a single artist's work. Comprising more than seventy volumes, this unique reference work catalogues over 2,500 compositions and 10,000 works of art, ranging from drawings and oil sketches to prints and tapestries. The Corpus Rubenianum has been accomplished by the Centrum Rubenianum vzw and is a testament to Antwerp's status as the cradle of international Rubens research. With its specialist libraries, archives and research collections – including those of the Rubenshuis and the KMSKA – the city boasts an exceptional research infrastructure that attracts art historians, museum professionals and curators from all over the world every year.


Corpus Rubenianum

5. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The City of Antwerp and Visit Flanders are organising a press trip in the autumn of 2027 to mark the 450th anniversary of Rubens.

Interested? Please contact us at **press@visitantwerpen.be**.

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