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PRAG UM 1600. KUNST UND KULTUR AM HOFE RUDOLFS II.

Essen, Villa Hügel, 10. Juni bis 30. Oktober 1988; Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 24. November 1988 bis 26. Februar 1989.

In a review that appeared in the *The New York Times* of June 5, 1988, at the beginning of the week that *Prag um 1600* opened, John Russell stated: "If we never see a major international exhibition on this subject, it will be in part because Prague today is not a part of the international lending and borrowing circuit. It is also because the great paintings Rudolf II bought with such a frenzied alacrity have mostly been dispersed to Vienna and elsewhere."

It is understandable that even a well-informed critic might have had difficulty foreseeing such a show. Many previous initiatives to organize an exhibition on RudolFINE Prague had indeed shattered. Besides those circumstances mentioned by Russell, there has been a justifiable reluctance to allow such characteristic objects as vessels made of semi-precious stones, large bronzes, and large paintings, not to mention panels and carved glass, to travel. The political divisions of Europe since 1945 have also not facilitated the cooperation necessitated by the long-standing dispersion of objects, and of documents. In the days before *glasnost* it was not in the order of things to celebrate the court of a monarch, who moreover belonged to a dynasty that is supposed to have oppressed the lands of central Europe, as several people in authority even remarked in the past to this writer.

The realization of an exhibition devoted to art and culture in Prague during the reign of Rudolf II Habsburg must therefore be regarded as a major accomplishment in itself. Although it is an easy irony to note that the Kulturstiftung Ruhr (Essen) had a major hand in the organization of this show, the argument could be better turned to the effect that Rudolf II's thirty-five year reign as emperor, which has been regarded as ineffective or disastrous, in part because it was not marked by "glorious" wars, in fact preserved the peace in central Europe, and thus permitted the cultural efflorescence evinced by the

objects displayed in the Villa Hügel to occur. It might also be emphasized that the large-scale international east-west cooperation that was necessary to carry off this enterprise is entirely appropriate to the spirit of a court that thrived upon multi-national collaboration and religious tolerance.

This project is significant as the first large-scale exhibition devoted to the subject since 1912, and the first really comprehensive show ever held. While it thus establishes a landmark in the historiography of Rudolfine art, as discussed in the January 1988 pages of *Kunstchronik*, it will probably also gain for Rudolfine Prague the wider public recognition that it has deserved. The Essen exhibition is indeed further warranted by the very circumstances that made its realization difficult to date. Without travelling from Malibu to Moscow, and from Rome to Uppsala, it has been impossible to get a full visual impression of what was done Prague: even in Vienna, where the greatest concentration of Rudolfine works is found, many objects are usually either exhibited in disparate locations, in reserve, or not on display.

The splendid impression made by the display in the Villa Hügel must convince scholars and the general public alike of the high quality and fascination of what was done in Prague around 1600. Although for purposes of comparison it might have been better to have hung together related paintings by Dirck de Quade van Ravesteijn, Bartholomäus Spranger or Joseph Heintz, to have grouped Matthias Gundelach's pictures in one place, or to have arrived at a more satisfactory solution for displaying scientific instruments, the Krupp villa nevertheless provided a suitably luxurious, if obviously anachronistic setting for the lavish treasures on view.

Within the limits of the possible, the exhibition also presented a good representation of Rudolfine art. Much of what was missing in Essen may appear in Vienna, where the paintings galleries of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and the Schatzkammer will suggest other aspects of Rudolf II's interests as a collector and ruler, where a different selection of drawings will be shown, where the complement of paintings will also be considerably enlarged and thus strengthened, and where the display may be improved (Kunsthistorisches Museum, November 24 1988 to February 26 1989). However, it may be of interest to note that several works that were illustrated and discussed in the catalogue will probably not be seen in either place. These include a sculpture attributed to Giovanni Battista Quadri from Prague (cat. no 70), paintings by Hans von Aachen from Leningrad (cat. no. 96), Linz (cat. no 107), and London (cat. no. 97), a drawing by him from Moscow (cat. no. 183), and an important painting by Roelant Savery (cat. no. 142); these absences obviously seriously weakened the Essen presentation of Von Aachen, whose work could not otherwise be seen in that many fine examples. On the other hand, the Essen exhibition was enriched by two drawings not in the catalogue, including Jan Sadeler's portrait of Georg (Joris) Hoefnagel from Bremen, and a portrait of Rudolf II from Budapest recently attributed to Dominicus Custos (illustrated and briefly discussed in Werner Schade, „Dresden und Prag um 1600," in *Prag um 1600. Beiträge zur Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II.*, Freren, 1988, pp. 264, 266 n. 1, ill. fig. 1, p. 261), as well as by Sadeler's engraving of *Neptune and Caenis* (or *Coenis*) after Spranger.

The serious tone — and sheer weight! — of the large catalogue matched the impression of splendor and high quality that the exhibition conveyed: *Prag um 1600. Kunst und*

Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II. Freren, Luca Verlag, 1988. 624 pages including 96 color plates and approximately 508 black and white illustrations. (The collection of essays, *Prag um 1600. Beiträge zur Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II.* Freren, Luca Verlag, 1988, was published on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition, and serves as a supplement to the catalogue. As it represents the results of the Prague conference of 1987 already reviewed by Lars Olof Larsson in the January, 1988 issue of *Kunstchronik*, pp. 16—19, it is not further discussed here, however.) The catalogue included lengthy introductory essays on the historiography of Rudolf II, the general qualities of Rudolfine art, the personality of the emperor, natural science, music, architecture, sculpture, painting, drawings, *Kunstkammerstücke*, medals, coins, and wax sculpture, and the Jewish presence in Prague. Along with the generally informative entries, these were with one exception written by specialists. The legends of the mad emperor who fled from politics to art, of the weird *Sammelsurium* of objects, and of mannerist mysteries should now finally be put to rest.

The magisterial summary of R. J. W. Evans in the catalogue offers instead a much more nuanced account of the complexities of the political field in Prague and Europe around 1600 in which Rudolf II could operate. Similarly Herbert Haupt presents a careful analysis of the evidence for the emperor's personality and imperial claims. These essays tend much more to justify the conclusion expressed by the contemporary evaluation of Melchior Goldast that (in Haupt's modernized version): „Kaiser Rudolf soll ein hochverständiger weiser Fürst gewesen sein, durch dessen großes Geschick dem Reich so lange Zeit der Friede erhalten geblieben ist. Er hat ein heroisches Gemüt gehabt und war ein Mensch, der an nichts Gemeinem und Gewöhnlichem Geschmack fand...”

In his essay on „Die Wissenschaft am Hofe Rudolf II. in Prag,” Zdeněk Horský redresses part of another earlier imbalance, that had been perpetuated even by Evans' otherwise excellent book on *Rudolf II and his World* (Oxford, 1973): Horský emphasizes *Naturwissenschaft* instead of magic, and astronomy instead of alchemy. It is of course arguable that the product of Rudolfine Prague which had the most enduring effect was Johannes Kepler's work there.

Kepler was also interested in music, and the relatively neglected subject of music at the imperial court is also well served by the catalogue essay by Robert Lindell. Although there has been a growing specialized literature on the subject, both in Czech, and especially in German and English — by Brian Mann, Carmelo Comberinati, and Lindell himself — besides a short piece in the *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* of 1982, Lindell's account is really the first good general survey of the topic.

Among the more specifically art historical essays those by Teréz Gerszi on drawings and by Rudolf Distelberger on the *Kunstkammerstücke* deserve special mention. Gerszi's piece is the best overview of the subject to date, giving attention to issues of technique, function, and style, as well as to the accomplishments of the individual artists. Distelberger's article not only summarizes previous research, including his own important insights, but advances the discussion further. His continuing efforts to characterize more precisely the “imperial court workshops” (the use of the plural is his refinement) may be regarded as some of the most important contributions to our knowledge of these artists since the studies of Ernst Kris.

It is one of the benefits of this exhibition that the juxtaposition of objects allows for the scrutiny of new proposals such as those made in Distelberger's introductory essay, in the other introductions, and also in the many informative entries. The remarks that follow are some responses to the stimulating suggestions advanced in the catalogue, which, besides generally representing the current state of research, was filled with new attributions and interpretations.

One reaction was provoked by the display of sculpture in the exhibition. If the works attributed to the shadowy figure of Hans Mont might have previously seemed to lack coherence, these doubts appeared confirmed by comparison of the sculpture brought together in the show. Mont also now appears in danger of becoming a proverbial waste bin of attributions, to which more and more increasingly unrelated sculptures of the 1570's or 1580's, get assigned (an embracing couple called *Mars and Venus* recently acquired by the Getty Museum, and the terracottas in the Cisařský pokoj at Buřovice). The attribution of a bronze to Spranger (*Neptune and Caenis*, or *Coenis*, not *Caelis*, cat. no. 76) does not help either, but remains unconvincing: the entry on this piece does still not take into account the existence of another bronze of which it may be a later cast (Linsky Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art), nor the many other doubts expressed about the piece. (See: *The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1984, cat. no. 84. Besides the discussion in this reviewer's *L'École de Prague* that Larsson does cite, see further the comments in "Eros et poesia: la peinture à la cour de Rodolphe II", *Revue de l'art*, 69, 1985, p. 46, n. 92; the questions raised by E. K. J. Reznicek in a review in *Oud Holland*, 99, 1985, p. 72, and the doubts expressed by Hugo Johannsen, *The Graphic Art of Hendrick Goltzius as Prototype for Danish Art during the Reign of Christian IV*, *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 2, 1983 [1984], p. 110, n. 52 also need to be considered.) In any event it is necessary to realize that there were clearly more sculptors active in central Europe during the 1570's and 1580's (Hans Monmacher is one such sculptor who is documented in Vienna), as well as competent goldsmiths and casters, such as the artist of the Pegasus for Gerhard Emmoser's celestial sphere, made in Vienna in 1579 (cat. no. 445), than have yet been defined as personalities. Further research into sculpture of this period might prove fruitful.

Distelberger's bold attributions of small sculpture and goldsmiths' work to Jan Vermeyen are however also not unproblematic. His attributions are based in part on evidence for Vermeyen as an artist who modelled in wax, according to his interpretation of the 1607—11 inventory (p. 451). But this inventory refers to „H. Formay,” and this artist can now be identified as the author of a medal depicting Rudolf II (see cat. no. 463). As Rudolf-Alexander Schütte mentions (p. 576), Hans Formai's relation to Jan Vermeyen must be clarified. Close examination of this work in comparison to objects attributed to Vermeyen considerably complicates the question.

Reactions to the entries on paintings do not in general evoke such relatively large issues. Instead one may respond to the juxtaposition of Von Aachen's young couple and *Bacchus, Venus and Amor* (cat. no. 92 and no. 93). Although the artist represents himself in these pictures, the female figures in them clearly have much different facial features. Direct comparison should finally undermine the continuing, and rather

romantic, suggestion that Von Aachen's wife serves as the model for the women in his paintings. The same may be said for the identification of the artist's son as Amor (in cat. no. 93); this is supposed to be the same figure as a boy or the youth in later paintings. Efforts to date Von Aachen's works based on the relative age of the models used seem to be devoid of firm foundation. Another hypothesis that needs to be treated with caution, until there is a more systematic account for the working procedures of Rudolfine artists, is the suggestion that the Braunschweig *Three Graces* (cat. no. 100) is a „bozetto.”

The entries on Giuseppe Arcimboldo lack references to some of the significant literature on the artist, and hence an adequate (or accurate) treatment of the interpretation of his paintings. It is moreover most unlikely that Rudolf II, as G. P. Lomazzo puts it, would have anxiously awaited to receive a portrait of himself as Vertumnus (cat. no. 111) if this were meant to be a symbol of „*menschliche Unbeständigkeit*:" this would have been an impossible gesture of *lèse-majesté* by an artist who had been made count palatine.

The logic whereby works by Van Ravesteyn are said possibly to be bozzetti (see cat. no. 139, 141) is again unclear; significant differences in the iconography, composition and handling of these works makes this suggestion unlikely. The account of the dating of the versions of the *Three Graces* (cat. no. 139) offered in *L'École de Prague* is misleading: these paintings were treated together in one entry, implying a similarity in dating; all that was said was that the Baltimore version might be considered an earlier effort (cf. *The School of Prague*, p. 222). The copy probably after Von Aachen (*School of Prague* cat. no. 1.81) given to Van Ravesteyn elsewhere in the catalogue (pp. 187–88) also does not resemble any other work by his hand.

Roelant Savery's mountain landscape (cat. no. 143) is clearly dated 1608. In the treatment of iconographical issues in the entries on Spranger's paintings, the discussion of the *Allegory on the Turkish Wars* (cat. no. 163) misses the depiction of soldiers and burning cities along a river in the background, mistakes the gesture of the prostrate Turk, whose arm is on the ground, as a threatening one, and misreads the relation of the eagle in the foreground, where it is after all in different plane from that of the Turk, to other, different *impres*e. The moralizing interpretation especially of Spranger's painting of *Hercules Deianeira and Nessus* (cat. no. 154) overlooks that the *cornuto* gesture cuts two ways, and that there is humor in such scenes. In general the moralizing or philosophical interpretation offered in this and other entries, and in the introductory essay on Rudolfine mythologies, needs to reckon more with the recent critique of this approach (in „Eros et poesia,” and in *The School of Prague*), and with the question of cultural context for these works.

On the other hand, the revision of the chronology of Spranger's work Eliška Fučíková proposes in her entries demands somewhat lengthier consideration. As the changes from Konrad Oberhuber's 1958 dissertation to the expression of his opinion in *L'École de Prague* suggest, or for that matter the differences between the catalogues of *L'École de Prague* and *The School of Prague*, the attribution and chronology of Spranger's work has been in flux. Subtracting from while not adding to Spranger's œuvre, Michael Henning's recent dissertation (*Die Tafelbilder Bartholomäus Sprangers*

(1546–1611). *Höfische Malerei zwischen „Manierismus“ und „Barock“*, Essen, 1987) at least demonstrates that differences of opinion can still exist about details of dating and attribution in this admittedly difficult area. As Jürgen Zimmer (p. 347, in cat. no. 203) remarks, a critical catalogue of Spranger's drawings is also certainly needed.

Thus Fučíková may well be correct when, suggesting a number of refinements to the interpretation of the Müller epitaph (cat. no. 158), she places it c. 1592. Many of her other suggestions are however not so fortunate. *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus* (cat. no. 156) is dated by her to the mid-1590's, but it and a related work with similar characters in Graz (see *School of Prague* cat. no. 20. 47 and 20. 48) are clearly recorded as having been dated 1590. The placement of *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus* close to the „*Triumph of Wisdom*“ (cat. no. 159) in the exhibition allowed one to discern the similarities in coloring, over green underpainting, and handling, with long, broad brush strokes, which indicate that these two pictures are probably quite close in date (as Fučíková's own dating for both of them, c. 1595, would also suggest); arguments for dating based on iconographic similarities to other works depicting Minerva as *Sapientiaatrix* are weak, as this theme, like others in the picture, is often repeated. While the presentation in the exhibition of *Diana after the Hunt* should have confirmed Fučíková's and this reviewer's attribution of this work to Spranger, over the doubts of Henning and Sergiusz Michałski (in the January *Kunstchronik*, p. 31), the broad handling and blueish tonality of this work revealed themselves as very close to the qualities of *Venus and Bacchus* (cat. no. 157), hung next to it in the show. As was tacitly suggested in *School of Prague*, where they appear as subsequent entries in the catalogue (20. 59 and 20. 60), these pictures are probably close in date. While it is true that *St. Luke Painting the Virgin*, the only painting by Spranger that actually bears a date of the 1580's (*School of Prague* 20. 18), does not allow the best comparisons, there are many other pieces of evidence, from dated or dateable prints, miniatures, and drawings, that have been employed for the reconstruction and dating of his series of mythologies of the time. Any attempt to redate these pictures to the mid- or late 1580's will among other things have to deal with such relatively hard pieces of evidence as Jan Sadeler's print of 1580 after a recorded Spranger painting of *Neptune and Caenis* (or *Coenis*: *School of Prague* cat. no. 20. 4) and an anonymous drawing in Leipzig after *Glaucus and Scylla* (*School of Prague* cat. no. 20. 9) that is clearly dated 1586. In any instance Fučíková misreads the dating in *L'École de Prague* (cat. no. 20–36) of the mid-1580's for *Hercules and Omphale* (exhibition cat. no. 155) as being the mid-1590's; although Spranger's coppers are hard to situate exactly, it is unlikely that this work postdates the *Allegory on the Reign of Rudolf II* (*School of Prague*, cat. no. 20.54), and it also possesses a subject matter, figure types, a humorous treatment, and *couleur changeant* modelling, and general composition similar to that of the mythologies of the 1580's.

Among the drawings entries the questions raised are in general not so far reaching. Again, one might want further evidence or reasoning that the drawing of an assembly of the gods by Von Aachen (cat. no. 177) is a „*modello*“, as opposed to a *ricordo*, for example — if not even a copy; there is also no evidence that the drawing of *Minerva leads Painting to Apollo and the Muses* (cat. no. 178) served „...*als Vorlage des für die kaiserlichen Sammlungen bestimmten und heute nicht mehr existierenden Bildes*“. It

seems as undemonstrable that a drawing of a sleeping Amor (cat. no. 181) is done from life, as to say that it represents the same youth found in other works, and even less likely, (his back is turned in any instance) the artist's son. The new attributions of portraits (cat. no. 184 and 185) to Von Aachen need further argument, as they seem to have little other than the authority of the scholar behind these attributions to recommend them. The only tournament designs by Arcimboldo whose dates are established reasonably firmly are no. 189 and 191 (the entries give no specific evidence, anyway.) Literature in the Hoefnagel entries is incomplete. The landscape given to Stevens (cat. no. 271) seems weak and uncharacteristic in comparison to the other sheets shown with it.

Of more consequence are some problems suggested by one of the Van Vianen drawings on display (cat. no. 290) containing four landscape sketches. Although the inscription on it is not entirely legible, a double-sided drawing in Warsaw that has been attributed to the artist, and which also has four scenes, in fact bears a signature that reads in part „...malergesehl geschehn in Anno 1657” (Teréz Gerszi, *Paulus Van Vianen, Handzeichnungen*, Hanau, 1982, cat. no. 64, fig. 70, 71). The Warsaw drawing is thus obviously a later copy after Van Vianen, and several more sheets can be given to this copyist. The existence of these copies lends support to the observation that cat. no. 290, though by another hand than the Warsaw copyist, with its multiple designs, but comparatively weak execution, is also a copy after Van Vianen.

Otherwise, the production of the catalogue betrays the effects of time pressure (and space?), evident not only in the abundance of typographic mistakes, incorrect bibliographical references, the presence of several reversed, or incorrect illustrations (e. g. for no. 319, an engraving by Aegidius Sadeler after Hans von Aachen, instead of a print by Jan Muller after Bartholomäus Spranger; or no. 153, a photograph of the state before cleaning), the absence of some illustrations altogether (e. g. for cat. no. 273, 274), but also in many misstatements or oversights. Time pressure probably explains some of these, statements such as one to the effect that no works except portraits are known from Arcimboldo's stay in Prague (p. 179) — drawings (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) for Ferdinand Hoffmann's house in Prague of course survive — or another that genre painting was almost exclusively the domain of Hans von Aachen at the imperial court — ignoring Savery or Stevens (p. 187). Just to mention two more examples affecting this reviewer: the discussion of an illustrated account of the 1585 festival of the Golden Fleece (cat. no. 8) cites an article which determined that the roll made was composed of separate hand-colored etchings and analyzed this phenomenon, but still describes this work as containing thirteen colored drawings („Hand-colored Prints and 'Pseudo-manuscripts': The Curious Case of Codex 7906 of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Wien, *Codices manuscripti* 2, Heft 1, 1976, pp. 26—31). Lars Olof Larsson presents a bronze Apollo that he had earlier published as a De Vries (cat. no. 66), referring to a print by Muller (cat. no. 86), but ignoring a drawing for it, to which Fučíková has referred in the catalogue (p. 181), and earlier (Eliška Fučíková, *Rudolfínská kresba*, Prague, 1986, p. 24, fig. 43); Fučíková suggests that the drawing is either for an Apollo or a gladiator by De Vries, but the identification of the long lost gladiator (cat. no. 61) rules out this latter connection; both scholars have forgotten the initial publication of the drawing in question by this reviewer: „A Drawing by Adriaen

de Vries in Gdańsk," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 46, 1984, pp. 203—209. Artists' biographies are also lacking.

But these are relatively minor criticisms of a major effort, that has not only culminated a stage in research, but pointed to where more work might effectively be done. Some of these areas, namely questions about sculpture, the decorative arts, working procedures, and interpretation, as well as a study of Spranger's drawings, have already been suggested. The recent discovery of a large batch of archival documents to which Rudolf Distelberger refers in his essay will undoubtedly contain much of importance. Already Distelberger has been able to discern the difference between *Hof-* und *Kammerkünstler*. It is in relation to this distinction that one can probably explain the work of an artist like Savery, who is not mentioned as having received monthly pay, but is now documented as having received large sums in 1612 for works delivered to the court. The existence of more untapped archival sources in Vienna is also discussed by Herbert Haupt, „Neue Quellen zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte am Hofe Kaiser Rudolfs II. in Wiener Archiven," in *Prag um 1600. Beiträge zur Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II.*, pp. 105—109. Other areas that could be profitably investigated further include the relation of art to literature, humanism and science in Prague. Not only may outstanding problems of interpretation be thereby clarified, but the connection between the two parts of the title, *Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II.*, will then be better understood.

The appreciation of the „School of Prague" has come a long way towards obtaining broad international esteem when the art critic of the *New York Times* can without qualification refer to it as „one of the high cultural moments of central Europe." Although not much was said in the catalogue about the general European importance of Rudolfine Prague, the outstanding exhibition in Essen, and certainly its later manifestation in Vienna, may nevertheless demonstrate that it is also time to drop the qualification „central."

Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann

VAN GOGH A PARIS

Ausstellung des Musée d'Orsay, Paris 2. 2.—15. 5. 1988. Katalog (Paris, Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux): FF 220,—.

(mit zwei Abbildungen)

Als erste große Gemäldeausstellung seit seiner Eröffnung im Dezember 1986 präsentierte das Musée d'Orsay in diesem Frühjahr eine Zusammenstellung von 68 Arbeiten Vincent van Goghs, die während dessen Aufenthaltes in Paris zwischen März 1886 und Februar 1888 entstanden waren. Nachdem das New Yorker Metropolitan Museum 1984 bzw. 86 die Werke aus van Goghs Jahren in Arles sowie Saint-Rémy und Auvers gezeigt hatte, war es an der Zeit, diese für van Goghs künstlerische Entwicklung so außerordentlich wichtige Periode zu dokumentieren. Paris als Standort bot sich selbstverständlich an, und durch tatkräftige Unterstützung aus Übersee in Person von Bogomila Welsh-