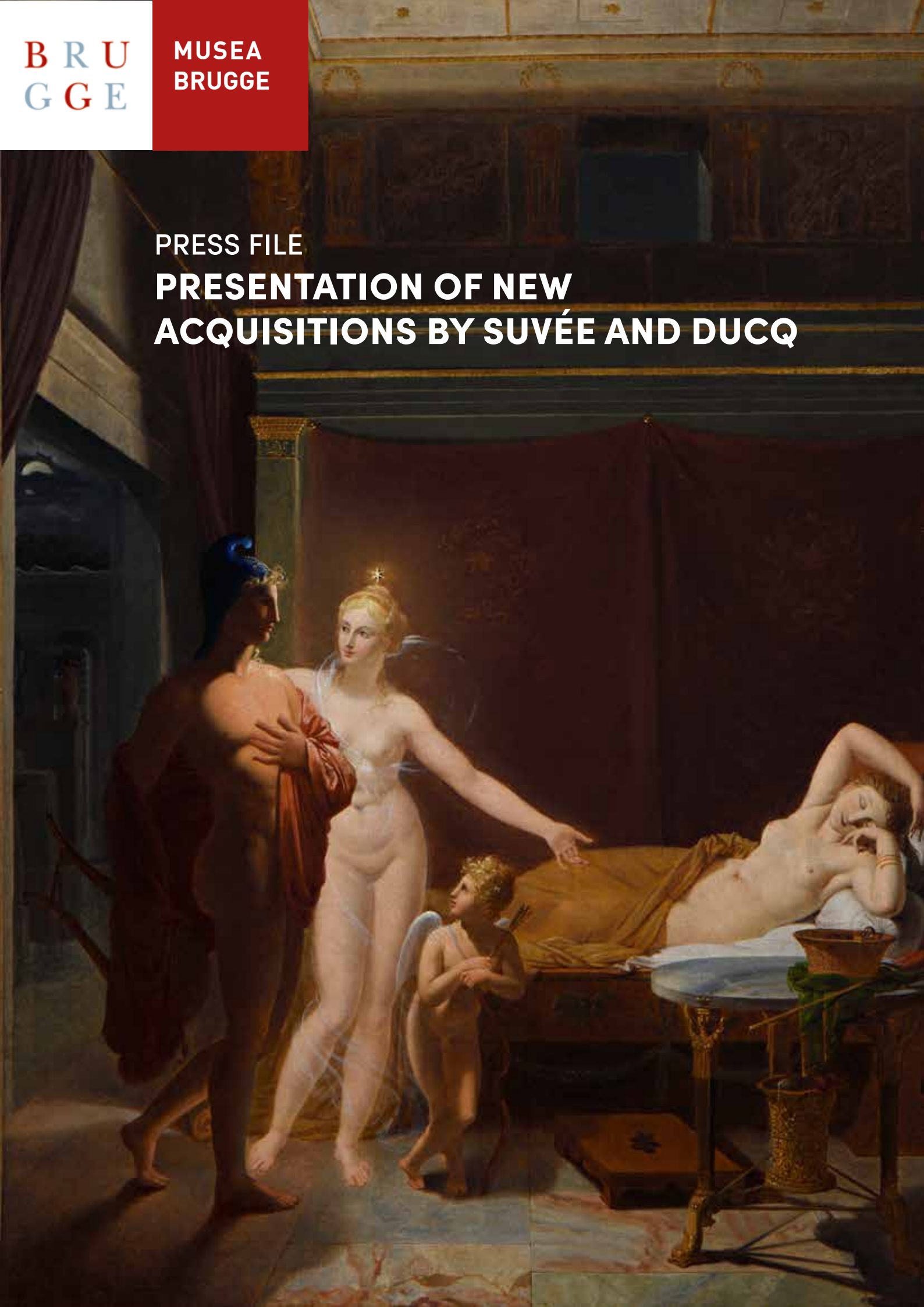


PRESS FILE

**PRESENTATION OF NEW
ACQUISITIONS BY SUVÉE AND DUCQ**



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Musea Brugge has once again further enriched its core collection of Neo-Classical works, this time with a drawing by Joseph-Benoît Suvée and a painting by Joseph-François Ducq. Both acquisitions can be associated with other works by the same artists, which sheds a unique light on the artistic process.

Musea Brugge has further enhanced its art patrimonium with an early drawing by Joseph-Benoît Suvée (Bruges 1743 – Rome 1807) and a painting by Joseph-François Ducq (Ledegem 1762 – Bruges 1829). The drawing of St. Sebastian was made in 1774 by Suvée, a native of Bruges, during his study trip as a 'pensionnaire' at the 'Académie de France' in Rome. Two years earlier, Suvée had

won the highly coveted Rome Prize, as a result of which he was able to spend the following two years in the city. Ducq's painting of 'Venus brings Paris to Helen's apartment in Sparta' is a refined work that was originally part of the Bruges collection of Baron Anselme de Peellaert. Both works were recently purchased in France from Galerie Michel Descours.

Drawing of St. Sebastian by Joseph-Benoît Suvée

The drawing by Joseph-Benoît Suvée depicts St. Sebastian in a landscape. The naked and muscular saint is bound to a tree and is leaning backwards with his head in a moment of ecstasy and rapture. At the top left, two angels soar above the scene, carrying the martyr's crown.

This work occupies an important position in Suvée's oeuvre. In contrast to the majority of his Italian drawings, the sheet of paper is signed and dated: 'J.B. Suvée f.1774'. For most of his drawings, Suvée primarily used red or black chalk, but here he experiments with a different technique: a pen drawing in brown (washed) ink with white highlights in gouache, a technique that he applies perfectly. The drawing is executed with great

bravura and shows how far Suvée's work had developed during his time in Rome.

This work is a fine addition to the collection of Musea Brugge, which already contains a number of academic nude studies and landscape drawings by Suvée.

In this drawing Suvée deals with a subject that he also used for the composition of a painting he made in 1777 during his stay in Rome. It is a typical example of the kind of practice exercise that was given to the students of the 'Académie de France'. Suvée's original painting has since been lost, but Bruges possesses a later copy made by Augustinus Van den Berghe.



Augustinus Van den Berghe, St. Sebastiaan, 1780-1790 ➤
oil on canvas, 193 x 129,5 cm
(Musea Brugge, inv. 0000.GRO0131.I)

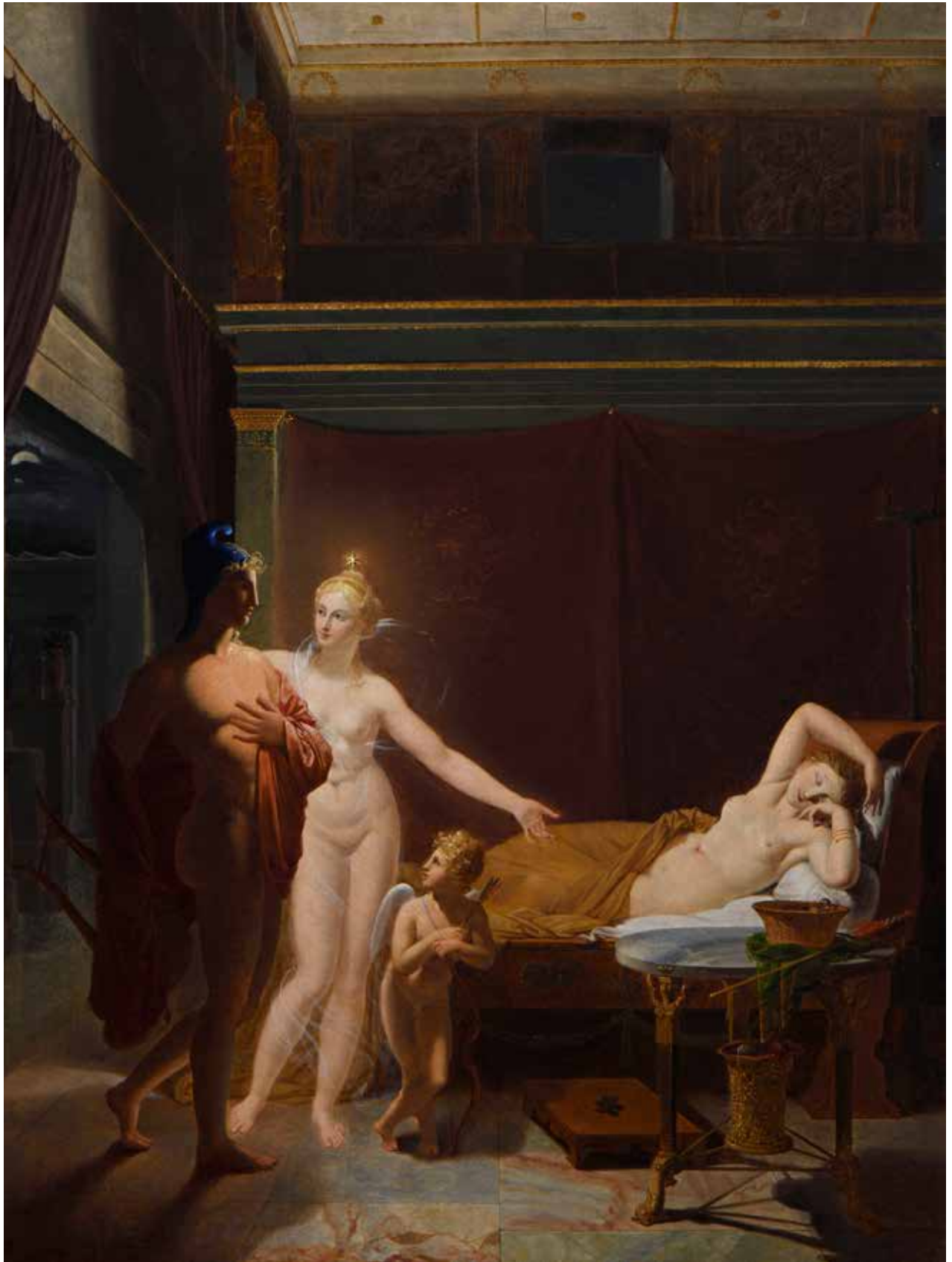
(copy of a painting by Suvée from the year 1777)



▲ Joseph-Benoît Suvée, St. Sebastian, 1774

Pen and brown ink, brown wash, highlights in white gouache on paper, 41.5 x 26 cm.

Signed and dated in the bottom left corner 'J.B. Suvée f.1774'



▲ Joseph-François Ducq

Venus brings Paris to Helen's apartment in Sparta, 1806, oil on canvas, 63 x 48 cm
(signed and dated on the pedestal: 'J. Ducq. FAT.1806')

Painting of 'Venus brings Paris to Helen's apartment in Sparta' by Joseph-François Ducq

This highly atmospheric painting is based on a scene from Greek mythology. Paris, the son of the Trojan king, has come to Sparta to capture the heart of the beautiful Helen. Venus uses her powers to ensure that Helen falls in love with Paris and will later leave her husband, King Menelaus. In this painting, we see how Paris and Helen meet each other in the intimacy of Helen's luxurious bedroom. The awakening love between the couple is stimulated by a radiant and naked Venus, accompanied by her son Eros, who is depicted with his traditional attributes of a bow and arrow.

Joseph-François Ducq completed this painting shortly before his departure to Rome in December 1806. The work was immediately added to the art collection of Anselme de Peellaert, a rich Bruges nobleman, who was married to Countess Isabelle d'Affaytadi de Ghistelles. De Peellaert lived with this wife and children in a stately mansion known as the 'Zeven Torens' (Seven Towers, in the Hoogstraat), which he had renovated completely in the luxurious Empire style. As a fervent admirer of this French style, he spent a fortune to convert his city residence into a true Empire palace. He

also started a new building project on his 'Forreist' estate in Sint-Andries. This castle – to a design by the architect Joseph van Gierdegom – was intended to serve as a model of Empire architecture. However, de Peellaert's love of splendour ran up huge debts and he was eventually declared bankrupt, resulting in the compulsory sale of all his property. This auction took place over three days between 19 and 21 March 1816. The sixth lot to be sold was this mythological scene by Ducq.

This refined painting in an 'antique' style perfectly illustrates the taste of the flamboyant and ostentatious Anselme de Peellaert. The work also has a rarity value, since very few of Ducq's historical works have survived the ravages of time.

Two drawings by Ducq have a direct connection with the recently purchased painting: a detailed study piece of the Trojan prince Paris wearing a Phrygian cap and a sheet with a number of spontaneously sketched scenes and figures that can be described as 'première pensée' (first thoughts). These two works bring us close to the creative process of the artist.



▲ Joseph Ducq, Study for Paris and Compositional and figure studies for the painting 'Venus brings Paris to Helen's apartment in Sparta', ca. 1806

(drawing in black chalk, 50.7 x 38.5 cm, inv. 0000.GRO2088.II and drawing in pencil and pen with brown ink, 18.4 x 16.8 cm, inv. 0000.GRO2514.II).

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All arrangements can be made via the press officer of Musea Brugge, sarah.bauwens@brugge.be or
t +32 50 44 87 08.

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The press file can be consulted there and texts can be copied.

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