PRESS INVITATION

The Gotha Rubens Mystery: A Happy Ending After 80 Years

Press conference: Monday, 9 November 2026, at 11 am in Gotha



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Embargoed until 9 November 2026

We look forward to welcoming you. Please register until 5 November by emailing saheb.artpress@uteweingarten.de or susanne.finne-hoerr@friedenstein-stiftung.de

For the first time since 1945, the five important oil sketches by Peter Paul Rubens will once again be on display together at the Ducal Museum in Gotha from 9 November 2026. Once among the outstanding treasures of the Gotha collection, the group of works was dispersed after the Second World War. Two sketches were taken to Russia, while three others found their way illegally into the American art market. Now, this historic group has been reunited, with the return of "**The Prophet Elijah in the Golden Chariot**" and the presentation of "**Saint Augustine**" on loan.

The oil sketches will be presented in the **special exhibition "Rubens in Gotha. Collection, Loss, and Return"**, on view in the Hall of the Netherlandish Masters of the Ducal Museum Gotha from 10 November 2026 to 9 May 2027.

The Ernst von Siemens Art Foundation and the Friedenstein Foundation Gotha are thus ushering in the Rubens Year, marking the 450th anniversary of Peter Paul Rubens's birth. The press conference will explore the fascinating history of the works and shed light on the efforts behind their recovery, from provenance research and legal clarification to the negotiations that made the returns possible. It will also highlight the significance of this extraordinary reunion for the Gotha Collection.

Speakers:

Dr Tobias Pfeifer-Helke – Director of the Friedenstein Foundation Gotha

Knut Kreuch – Lord Mayor of Gotha and Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Friedenstein Foundation Gotha

Dr Martin Hoernes – Secretary-General of the Ernst von Siemens Art Foundation

Dr Timo Trümper – Director of Research and Collections at the Friedenstein Foundation Gotha and curator of the exhibition

Following the press conference, there will be an opportunity to ask questions, conduct interviews and view the reunited Rubens oil sketches at the Ducal Museum Gotha.

Date: Monday, 9 November 2026

Venue: Ducal Museum Gotha, Schlossplatz 2, Hall of the Netherlandish Masters

Time: 11 am



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1. **Peter Paul Rubens**, *Saint Augustine*, 1620, oil on oak panel, 48 × 63.5 cm. © Emil Bührle Collection, permanent loan to Kunsthaus Zürich
2. **Peter Paul Rubens**, *The Prophet Elijah in the Golden Chariot*, 1620/21, oil on oak panel, 32.5 × 44 cm. © Eric Turquin
3. **Peter Paul Rubens**, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 1621, oil on oak panel, 48 × 62 cm. © Friedenstein Foundation Gotha; photograph: Julius Fröbus GmbH
4. **Peter Paul Rubens**, *Saint Basil*, 1620, oil on oak panel, 49.5 × 64.4 cm. © Friedenstein Foundation Gotha; photograph: Julius Fröbus GmbH
5. **Peter Paul Rubens**, *Saint Athanasius Triumphing over Arius*, 1620, oil on oak panel, 49.6 × 64.4 cm. © Friedenstein Foundation Gotha; photograph: Julius Fröbus GmbH

Project-related Press Contact

ARTPRESS – Ute Weingarten
Alexandra Saheb
saheb.artpress@uteweingarten.de
+49 30 48 49 63 50

www.artpress-uteweingarten.de

Contact Friedenstein Foundation Gotha

Susanne Finne-Hörr (Press Officer)
susanne.finne-hoerr@friedenstein-stiftung.de
+49 3621 8234 501
+49 179 5020826

www.friedenstein.de | www.friedensteine.de

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