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Swedish Rubens paintings loaned to Munich in exchange for 20 masterpieces

In a one-off exchange this fall, two of Sweden's largest and most famous baroque paintings have been taken to Munich to star in a major exhibition of works by Peter Paul Rubens, the 17th-century Flemish master. In return, Nationalmuseum will receive 20 spectacular paintings from Munich next spring. These will go on show alongside other works in Nationalmuseum's *Rubens & Van Dyck* exhibition, opening 25 February 2010.

Mythological and biblical scenes. Still lifes of Flemish kitchens. Personal portraits, dramatic hunting scenes. The motifs in 17th-century Flemish painting are vivid and colourful. After several years' research and inventory of its Flemish art collection, Nationalmuseum can now present an exhibition, a guide book for the general public and a detailed catalogue.

In addition to the extensive collection owned by the Swedish state, the exhibition will be enhanced with loans from museums across the globe, including world-class works by Titian and Rubens from the Prado in Madrid. Good negotiating skills and offers to loan works in exchange proved the key to success. The two key works by Rubens had only been loaned out twice before their present sojourn in Munich. They will be back in Stockholm in time for the February opening.

The spring exhibition, *Rubens & Van Dyck*, focuses on Antwerp as the 16th century's principal artistic centre north of the Alps. Artists flocked to the city, and art trading flourished. Paintings were exported by the boatload to fashionable collectors across Europe. As a result of this high demand, artists chose to specialize, and close working relationships developed among them. As a master, Rubens collaborated with Jan Brueghel, Frans Snyders and Anthonis van Dyck on various details in his paintings. His pupils, who did the rough work, later became masters in their own right, with their own distinctive style and career.

The exhibition compares works by Rubens and Van Dyck, highlighting the relationship between them and the unparalleled influence of these two masters on Flemish painting in their day.

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Information on the Rubens exhibition at the Alte Pinakothek, Munich:
www.pinakothek.de/alte-pinakothek/

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