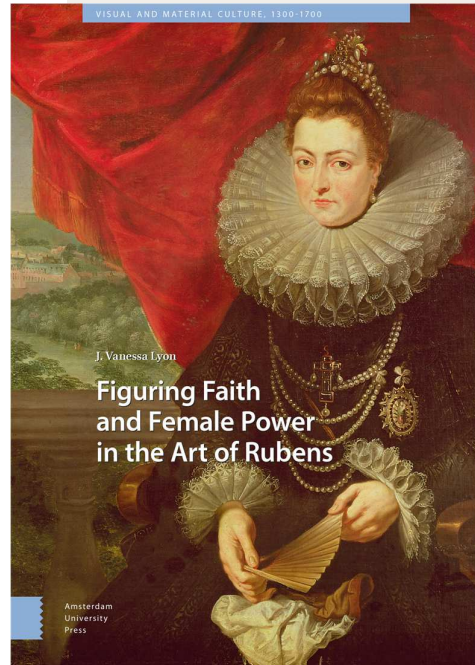


By **J. Vanessa Lyon**

Figuring Faith and Female Power in the Art of Rubens

Figuring Faith and Female Power in the Art of Rubens argues that the Baroque painter, propagandist, and diplomat, Peter Paul Rubens, was not only aware of rapidly shifting religious and cultural attitudes toward women, but actively engaged in shaping them. Today, Rubens's paintings continue to be used -- and abused -- to prescribe and proscribe certain forms of femininity. Repositioning some of the artist's best-known works within seventeenth-century Catholic theology and female court culture, this book provides a feminist corrective to a body of art historical scholarship in which studies of gender and religion are often mutually exclusive. Moving chronologically through Rubens's lengthy career, the author shows that, in relation to the powerful women in his life, Rubens figured the female form as a transhistorical carrier of meaning whose devotional and rhetorical efficacy was heightened rather than diminished by notions of female difference and particularity.



J. Vanessa Lyon, who received her PhD from the University of California at Berkeley, is Associate Professor of Art History at Bennington College. Her essays concerning early modern British and Flemish art and religion have appeared in *Word & Image*, *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, and *Art History*.

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