

Out of Admiration for the *Crab in a Box*

The Artistic Friendship between Charles Donker and Frans Pannekoek

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Charles Donker's 1971 etching *Crab in a Box* presents an unexpectedly direct image of a large North Sea crab wedged into a small wooden box (fig. 1). The amazingly-armoured creature with eight legs and two substantial claws has fascinated artists for centuries. There is a picture of a crab in the margin of Catherine of Cleves's Book of Hours, Albrecht Dürer captured one in watercolour while he was in Venice, and we find crabs in nineteenth-century Japanese prints and in the work of contemporary printmakers. In Donker's etching the viewer looks down on the crab from above. The beast lies on its back, legs and claws up, jammed between the sides of a small square box with numbers and parts of letters on the top edge. The result is an unusual still life, surrealist yet at the same time realistic – a paradox that has made this print one of the most sought-after sheets by the printmaker Charles Donker (born in Utrecht in 1940).

Donker studied at the monumental arts department of the Koninklijke Academie in Den Bosch (1957-61), where among other things he made mosaic murals. He became a member of the printmakers' collective *De Luis* (The Louse) around 1960 and was soon devoting himself exclusively to producing graphic art.¹ Like the work

Fig. 1
CHARLES DONKER,
*North Sea Crab
in a Box*, 1971.
Etching,
205 x 201 mm,
state III (3) with box,
inscription in small
letters: *Krab van
Selma Rijнауwen
November*.
Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (coll.
J. Nieuwstraten; inv.
no. RP-P-2004-1027).

of other members of *De Luis*, among them William D. Kuik, Donker's earliest prints tended to be decorative and sometimes surrealist, but gradually his work became more naturalistic. Studies of dead birds and animals are favourite subjects for his etchings, but in other prints seabirds, owls and sparrow hawks populate the often fantastical landscapes. The *Crab in a Box* comes at the end of this development.² The etching demonstrates his consummate mastery of the technique: with a breathtaking variety of pinpoint dots, speckles, dense and more widely-spaced hatching, achieving every conceivable nuance of black and white, the artist captures the skin, the fine hairs and the texture of the crab, the shadows and the wooden box.

The sheet was probably shown for the first time at the exhibition of Donker's etchings (with drawings by Peter Vos), which ran from December 1971 to January 1972 at Galerie Balans in Amsterdam, where it was seen and admired by the etcher Frans Pannekoek (born in Den Dolder in 1937), who had been living and working in Spain since 1967.³ Shortly before this, Pannekoek had acquired national fame through his friendship with the writer Gerard (Kornelis van het) Reve and through the book *Veertien etsen van Frans Lodewijk*

Pannekoek voor arbeiders verklaard door Gerard Kornelis van het Reve, published by Thomas Rap in Amsterdam in December 1967. A television appearance by Reve helped make the book a great sales success. And the same applied to Pannekoek's mostly tiny drypoint etchings of landscapes, dead creatures, insects and the like, which were sold by the publisher of the book immediately after the television broadcast and shown at Galerie Pribaut in Amsterdam in January 1968.⁴ By then Pannekoek had already moved to Spain, only returning to the Netherlands for short visits. The exhibition of Donker's work in 1971-72 was staged by the same gallery-owner, and this may have been why Pannekoek went to see the exhibition in January.⁵ Afterwards he wrote Donker an enthusiastic letter. Pannekoek met the maker of the *Crab in a Box* in Utrecht soon after this and again in the autumn of 1972 in his studio in Groningen. These meetings marked the start of an enduring friendship between the two artists which involved not just sporadic visits to Donker by Pannekoek, when he was back in the Netherlands, but also a few shared skating expeditions, an incidental correspondence, chiefly on Pannekoek's side, and the exchange of one another's work. They also had a joint exhibition in the Institut Néerlandais in 1979.⁶ While Donker did most of his work in the Netherlands, Frans Pannekoek continued to work as a painter and etcher in Spain, in and around Cadiz, and between 1986 and 2005 in France, chiefly in the Hautes Alpes, after which he went back to Spain.⁷ Apart from a brief spell at the school of applied arts in Amsterdam, Frans Pannekoek, unlike Donker, is essentially self-taught.⁸ Whereas Donker usually works on copper, Pannekoek makes his etchings and drypoint prints on zinc plates. Around 1970 they were united in their great admiration for the seventeenth-

century printmaker Hercules Segers: quite independently of one another they imitated his technique in a number of views of ruins.

With the aid of some examples of their work, I want to reveal here the artistic interaction between the two artists – both makers of prints of dead creatures and panoramic landscapes. Their admiration of one another's work is mutual and began for Donker several years before he met Pannekoek, when he saw the 1967 book by Reve and Pannekoek: the fourteen etchings reproduced in it made a deep impression on him. There was an affinity in the choice of simple subjects. The minuscule etchings of dead creatures, for instance Pannekoek's *Dead Mosquito*, find their equivalents in Donker's prints of the early seventies: dead insects – a beetle, a bluebottle – or a dead mouse, rat or mole. Pannekoek's *Dead Mole* of 1966-67 (fig. 2) could have been the direct inspiration for Donker's *Dead Mouse* of 1970 (fig. 3).⁹ Whereas only the words 'dead and soft' can be read in the circumscription surrounding Pannekoek's little *Dead Mole*, Donker has put a perfectly legible German quotation from Brehm above his *Dead Mouse*.¹⁰ In both prints the artists have devoted great care and attention to capturing the fur of the dead animals: Pannekoek solely in drypoint and Donker in a subtle combination of etched lines. Another etching of a dead animal in Pannekoek's oeuvre, *Orre, Hanging Dead Black Grouse* of 1972 (fig. 4), has acquired the same status as Donker's *North Sea Crab*, and the two artists consequently exchanged impressions of these prints. Pannekoek shot the black grouse during a shooting party on an estate near Wilhelmina in Sweden. He made some notes in pencil on the impression illustrated here, among them '16 12 1972, 7 days' work on this print ... and still not right'.¹¹ Details in grey and red

Fig. 2

FRANS PANNEKOEK,
Dead Mole,
Pingjum, 1967.
Drypoint,
55 x 89 mm,
state II (2) with
legible inscription:
dood en mollig
and *9 juli 1967*.
Fondation Custodia,
Paris (inv. no. 1994-
P. 293).

Fig. 3

CHARLES DONKER,
Dead Mouse, 1970.
Etching,
106 x 164 mm.
Inscription:
Der Teufel... wird
Brehms Tierleben.
Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam
(coll. J. Nieuwstraten;
inv. no. RP-P-2004-
1006).



Romme hoch's doede mol purigje 1867 15/12

Der teufel nimmt gern die Gestalt einer Maus an, und Kaspar Peucer, der Schwertsohn Luthers, sah ihn als solche unter der Haut einer Besessenen, hin und her kriechen. Die heilige Hildegard ist gar nicht gut auf die Mäuse zu sprechen und sagt von ihr sie habe ein heinlückisches Wesen und triebe teuflische Künste. Die Mäuse die die Sage scharenweise bei Bingen durch den Rhein schwimmen laßt, wo sie auf einer kleinen Insel im Mäuseurm (verdorben aus Mauturm Zylurm) den Erzbischof Hatto von Mainz auffressen ber Hausmaus ist sonst nichts bekannt. Sie erscheinen hienieden bei heulen löse in den Simmern, wo musiziert wird, und Räume in denen regelmäßig Musik erkönt, werden zuletzt ihre Lieblingaufenthaltsorte. Die sogenannten Singmäuse, von denen in der Zeit schriftten öfters berichtet wird, sind nach genaueren Untersuchungen nicht die pfeifischen Wesen, die den Singvögeln nachhören wollen, sondern wahrscheinlich immer welche Tiere deren eigentümliches Pfeifen durch Störung der einmündigen werf zeuse und anderer Organe hervorgerufen wird. Brehms Tierleben



Charles Darwin



Fig. 4
FRANS PANNEKOEK,
Orre: Hanging
Dead Black Grouse,
1972.

Drypoint,
203 x 130 mm.
Inscription:
Orre to Rudolf.

Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (coll.
Peter Schatborn;
inv. no. RP-P-200848).

Fig. 5

FRANS PANNEKOEK,
*Almond Tree near
 Valls in Catalonia,*
 1968.
 Etching, 80 x 184 mm.
 Coll. Peter Schatborn,
 Amsterdam (promised
 gift to Rijksmuseum).



Fig. 6

CHARLES DONKER,
*Pollard Black
 Mulberry in the
 Ardèche, 1972.*
 Etching and aquatint,
 124 x 198 mm.
 Rijksmuseum,
 Amsterdam (coll.
 J. Nieuwstraten; inv.
 no. RP-P-2004-1002).

have been added with a brush to the impression of the drypoint with which the nuances of the plumage are depicted.

When Donker spent some months in France for the first time in 1972, his sweeping etched landscapes with pollard mulberries or willows (fig. 6) were very like the prints of the Spanish mountain landscape near Valls that Pannekoek had made a few years

before (fig. 5), but unlike Pannekoek, who always made his prints in his studio, Donker worked straight onto small etching plates on the spot. In their immediacy, the absence of detail, the highly tonal handling and the liberal use of aquatint, the etchings created in Provence and the Ardèche between 1972 and 1980 occupy a place of their own in his oeuvre.



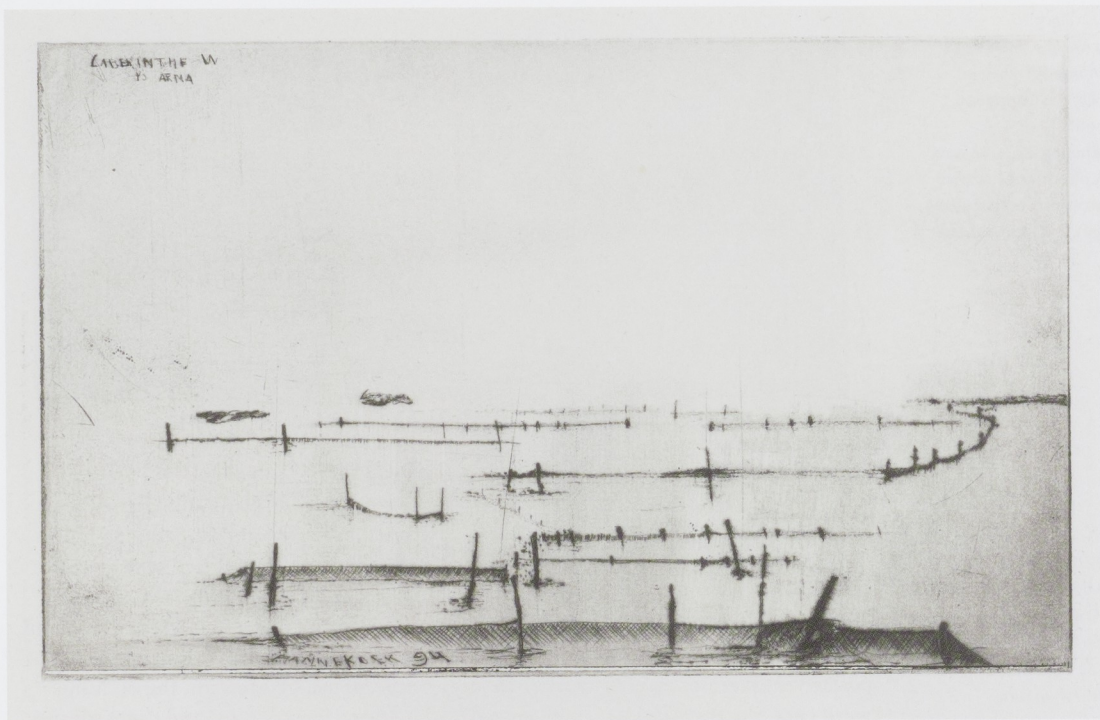


Fig. 7
FRANS PANNEKOEK,
*Labyrinth of
Fyke-Nets*, 1994.
Drypoint,
130 x 203 mm.
Coll. Peter Schatborn,
Amsterdam (promised
gift to Rijksmuseum).

Pannekoek's influence is greatest in these French landscapes. They turned Donker into a real landscape etcher in the nineteen-seventies, and this is expressed in the series of magnificent landscapes he made during this period in and around Rhijnauwen, in Groningen and on Terschelling – subtle in tone and depth, and extraordinarily sophisticated technically.

Contact between the two was greatest in the late seventies, in part because of the joint exhibition in Paris. In the autumn of 1977 Thomas Rap published books by both artists with illustrations of their prints and texts that they had written themselves: Donker's *Dagboek Rhijnauwen* (Rhijnauwen Diary) and Pannekoek's *Prints, Poems & Some Annotations* in a Dutch and an English edition.¹² When Frans Pannekoek settled in France in 1986, his activities as a printmaker dried up. On 9 December 1990 he wrote to Donker: 'My press is all set up ready and polished in Montjay and I started with a drypoint etching after

6 years! and of course it didn't come out. The printing, paper too wet, too dry?! too little pressure? The felt too old? God alone knows, it will have to work for me again. ... You're the only person I know who can understand what drypoint printing means, where there's almost nothing on it.'¹³ In 1990-91 he did make a few drypoint etchings, but it was not until 1994 that he really started to produce prints on a regular basis again.¹⁴ A superb example of these is *Labyrinth of Fyke Nets* on the IJsselmeer (fig. 7) of 1994, in which the space is defined with minimal lines and tone. This etching and related works have much in common with the rather larger winter landscapes that Donker was making around 1980, in which tone and posts were equally prominent. Did Pannekoek know these works and perhaps also *Eel Nets on the Groningen Coast* of 1987 (fig. 8), one of the rare etchings on the subject of the coast and the sea in Donker's oeuvre? In this relatively large print the nets are rendered in

great detail, the water and the few boats at the top of the sheet, in contrast, are much more cursory. Although the size and the degree of detail in the two etchings differ considerably, there is a kinship in the sublime tonal rendition of space. Pannekoek himself said in an interview with Bibeb in 1984: 'I'm no Charles Donker. I'm sometimes compared with him because we had an exhibition together. My work is much softer. People think that my work is shouldered aside by that strong, dark side of Donker, who is a very clever etcher. But it isn't pushed aside. I am a butterfly. He's down to earth, attached to the earth.'¹⁵ In a recent letter Pannekoek compared his method with Donker's in these words: 'I'm a feverishly inspired, breathless, sporadic worker (and painter) under high pressure and Charles is a stable, nonstop craftsman, who keeps on

working come rain or shine on his sublime oeuvre, mostly etchings.'¹⁶

During these years Donker's technical sophistication frequently resulted in very careful, highly finished and large etchings, while Pannekoek continued to work on a small scale, with an economy of line and a sure touch. Whereas many dozens of good impressions could be pulled from Donker's etched plates – although his editions are seldom larger than thirty sheets – this has never been true of Pannekoek's drypoint prints. They are often virtually unique impressions, very different from one another, primarily because of the varied use of tone.¹⁷

In Donker's *Crab in a Box* (fig. 1), which depicts a large North Sea crab (*Cancer pagarus*) – a species you do not find on the beach – with a shell measuring some 25 centimetres, there is an inscription etched in fine letters

Fig. 8
CHARLES DONKER,
*Eel Nets on the
Groningen Coast*,
1987.
Etching,
276 x 368 mm.
Private collection
(promised gift to
Rijksmuseum).



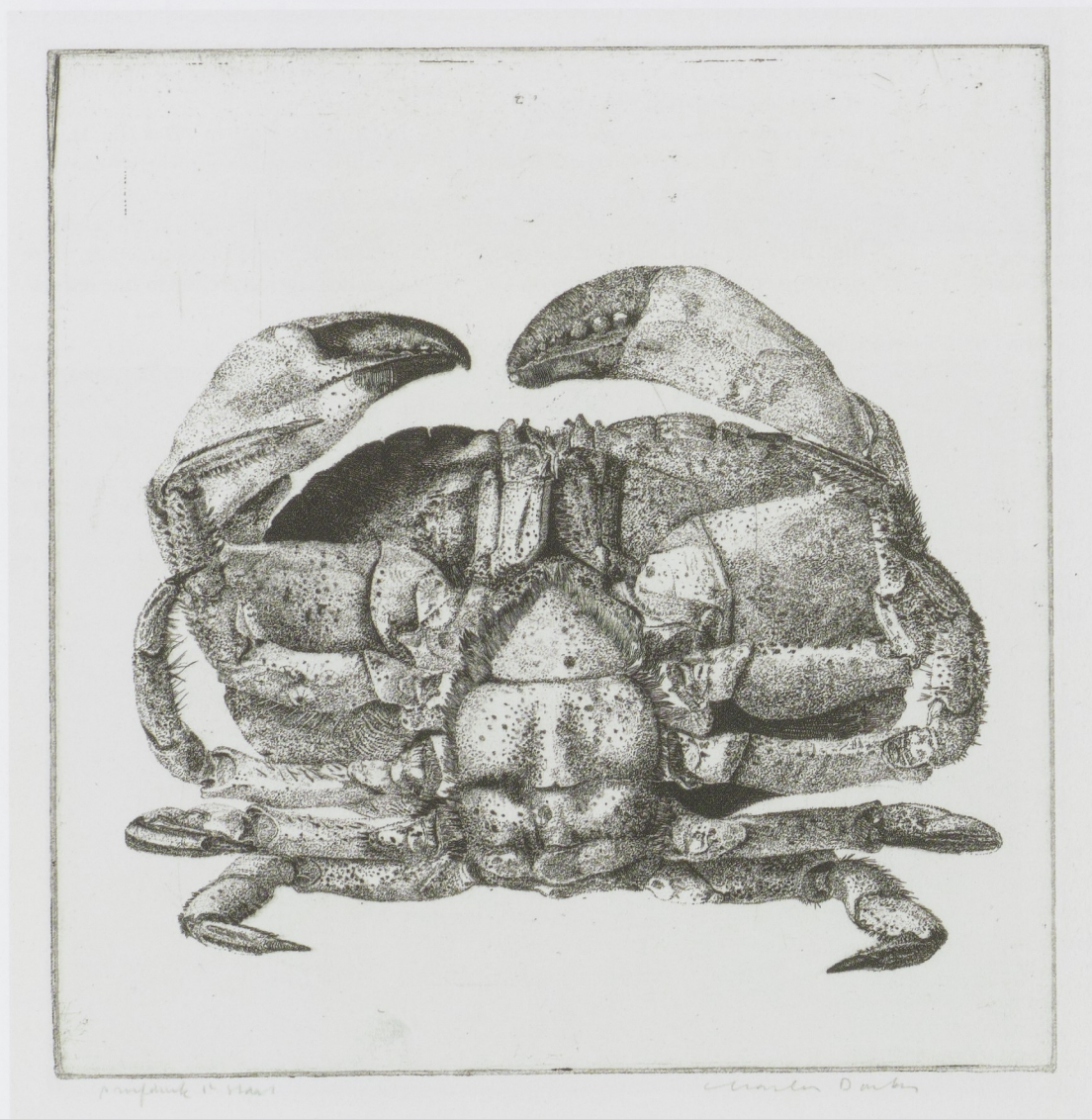
Fig. 9

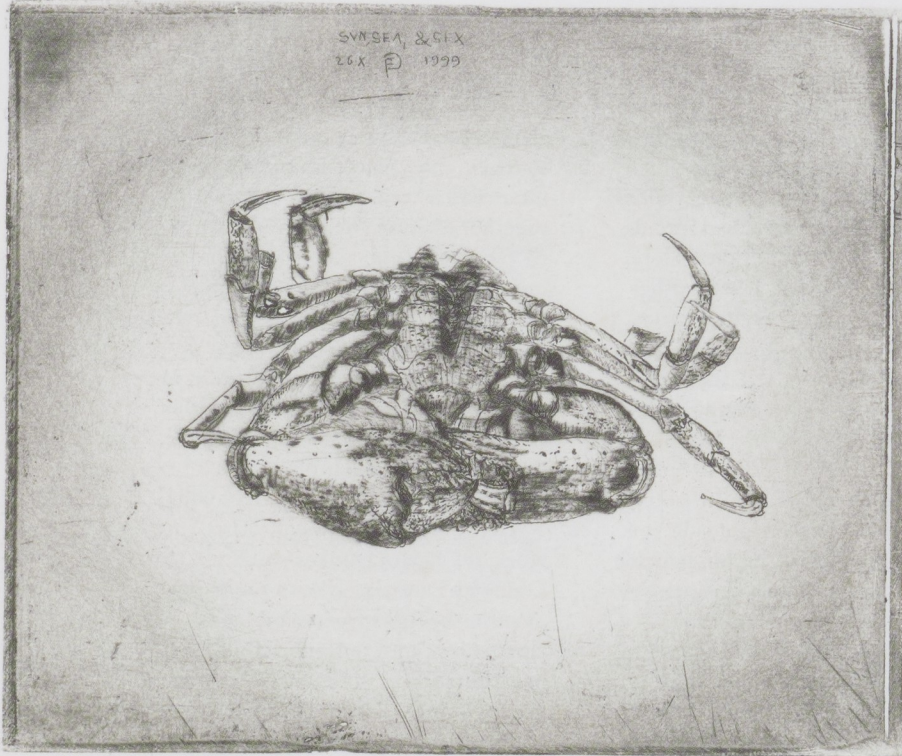
CHARLES DONKER,
North Sea Crab
[in a Box], 1971.
 Etching, 205 x 201 mm,
 state 1 (1) without
 background and box.
 Rijksmuseum,
 Amsterdam (gift in
 honour of Wouter
 Kloek; inv. no.
 RP-P-2009-1000).

in the bottom margin of the plate that provides some information about the background to the etching: *Krab van Selma* (Selma's Crab) (right) and *Rijnauwen november* (left). Donker got the large crab from Selma van Cornewal, the second wife of the artist Willem van Leusden, who worked as an artist and photographer in the Comparative Physiology Laboratory at the University of Utrecht.¹⁸ The creature was preserved in formalin in a glass jar. Donker etched it, lying on

Fig. 10

FRANS PANNEKOEK,
Crab on its Back,
 1999.
 Etching with drypoint,
 100 x 118 mm.
 With inscription
 SVN SEA & SEX in
 plate and 26 x 1999.
 Coll. Peter Schatborn,
 Amsterdam (promised
 gift to Rijksmuseum).





old paper.
montfor 5-5 me
30 oct 99.

its shell, in his studio in Rhijnauwen in November 1971.¹⁹ A proof of the first state (fig. 9) reveals that he initially etched the crab without any background. He then added the little wooden box – actually a drawer from an apothecary cabinet he owned. The box, which lends the print its extraordinary fascination, was probably an afterthought; this is confirmed by the addition of letters and numbers, which Donker often incorporated into his prints at this time, on the top edge.²⁰ Almost twenty years later, in October 1999, Pannekoek picked up the subject of the crab in two etchings, for which he used a smaller shore crab (*Carinus maenas*, 4 to 6 cm) that he had found on the Atlantic coast of France. Here, though, it was Albrecht Dürer rather than Donker who was his inspiration.²¹ In one of the etchings (fig. 10), with the inscription *SVN SEA & SEX*, the crab, like Donker's, is depicted lying on its back in a box. It is possible, with some difficulty, to make out along the plate edge the narrow edges of a little box with two hinges on the right side. It is an unobtrusive border, within which it is the plate tone that actually encloses the crab and not, as in Donker's print, the sides of the box. Whereas Donker's portrait of the dead crab has most definitely become a still life, Pannekoek's crab, although dead, has great immediacy.

The two-man show of the works of the two graphic artists in the Institut Néerlandais in Paris in the spring of 1979 coincided with a larger exhibition of work by the seventeenth-century etcher Wenzel Hollar in the Fondation Custodia's collection. By then, Pannekoek had been well known at the Institut Néerlandais and Custodia for some time, he exhibited there in 1970 and 1971 and he introduced Charles Donker, who showed his prints there with *De Luis* in 1973 and had his own exhibition two years later. The show in 1979 explored the

similarities of content between the two artists.

As it did for my colleague Peter Schatborn, my first acquaintance with the work of these two printmakers led me to buy some of their prints. The love for and admiration of their work has endured. Over the decades that followed Schatborn amassed some seventy sheets by Pannekoek, which will eventually have a place in the Rijksmuseum collection; in 2008 he presented Pannekoek's *Orre* (fig. 8).²² Donker's oeuvre in the period from around 1960 to 2000 is already represented in the Rijksmuseum by several hundred sheets that were brought together by Joop Nieuwstraten from 1976 onwards and acquired by the museum in 2003. For Nieuwstraten, too, it was the *Crab in a Box*, illustrated in a newspaper review of Donker's first major retrospective in Utrecht in 1976, that led him to seek Donker out. For twenty-five years he supported the artist with regular purchases of his prints and the occasional drawing.

Thanks to these two collectors, the work of Charles Donker and Frans Lodewijk Pannekoek has a permanent place in the Rijksprentenkabinet alongside that of their illustrious predecessors. In the extensive collection of Donker's prints brought together by Nieuwstraten, numerous proofs provide a surprising picture of the stages involved in creating a number of etchings. The addition of two proofs of Donker's *Crab in a Box*, in honour of Wouter Kloek, gives this fascinating print a whole new dimension.

NOTES

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- * With many thanks for information and suggestions to Charles and Niovy Donker, Frans Pannekoek (and for giving me permission to quote from his letters), Maria van Berge-Gerbaud, Peter Schatborn, Roman Koot, Anita Hopmans, Dick Adelaar, Peter van Poppel, Deborah Campert. The author

- of this article is currently compiling a catalogue of Charles Donker's prints on the basis of Joop Nieuwstraten's Donker collection and with the help of the artist.
- 1 On De Luis: Roman Koot (ed.), *Grafisch gezelschap De Luis 1960-80 – Individualisten in clubverband*, Amsterdam 2008.
 - 2 *Ibid.*, p. 55. On Donker's work see Charles Donker, *Dagboek Rhijnauwen*, Baarn 1977 and Eddy de Jongh & Peter Schatborn, *Charles Donker - etsen*, Amsterdam 2002 (with a brief biographical note on p. 135, and for the *Crab in a Box*, pp. 90, 129); the print featured in the exhibition *Charles Donker* in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht in 1976, as no. 89 (wrongly labelled as dating from 1972), and was illustrated in several reviews of the exhibition.
 - 3 The exhibition of the work of Peter Vos and Charles Donker ran from 16 December 1971 to 13 January 1972 at Galerie Balans, Leidsegracht, Amsterdam. With thanks to Maria van Berge-Gerbaud, who remembered going to see this exhibition with Pannekoek at the beginning of January: this was the first time either of them had seen Donker's work.
 - 4 Gerard Kornelis van het Reve and Frans Lodewijk Pannekoek, *Veertien etsen van Frans Lodewijk Pannekoek voor arbeiders verklaard door Gerard Kornelis van het Reve (Fourteen etchings by Frans Lodewijk Pannekoek explained for workers, by Gerard Kornelis van het Reve*, Amsterdam 1967. On the occasion of its publication at the beginning of December 1967, Reve discussed Pannekoek's etchings in the television programme *Mise en scène* on 8 December 1967. The next day they were on sale at the publisher's offices in Reguliersdwarsstraat. Following on from this, there was an exhibition of Pannekoek's work at Galerie Pribaut from 11 January to 6 February 1968. See Gerard Reve, *Brieven aan Frans P. 1965-1969*, with an introduction by Reve and commentary by Nop Maas, Utrecht 1984, esp. pp. 53-55, 72-73, 114-15 (text of Reve's opening speech). The letters had appeared previously in *Het Lieve leven* 1974, pp. 7-73: "De Kunst Gaat Voor De Baat Uit." *Brieven aan Frans Pannekoek alias Bullie van der Knaak*, pp. 33-42.
 - 5 Debbie Wolf, now Deborah Remco Campert, began her career as a gallerist in 1968-69 at Galerie Pribaut, in a room in the premises of the advertising agency Prad in Wibautstraat, and ran Galerie Balans on Leidsegracht from 1970 to 1979; between 1982 and 1995 she was responsible for the AMRO Bank's art collection and from 1993 to 2003 for ABN-AMRO's. See the previous note for the exhibition of Pannekoek's work in 1968; a second exhibition (new etchings and drawings, with J. Roelofs) was staged in January-February 1971 at Galerie Balans, where Donker exhibited with Peter Vos in 1971-72 and again in September 1973, and had a solo show in October-November 1975.
 - 6 Pannekoek was introduced to the Institut Néerlandais by Hein Siedenburg in 1969, and had solo exhibitions there in the spring of 1970 and in December 1971. Donker showed there in 1973 with De Luis, known as *Le Cercle de Pou* (28 March - 20 April 1973). Charles Donker's one-man show in 1975 (without a catalogue) ran from 6 February - 2 March 1975. There is a stencilled list of the works by Donker and Pannekoek that were shown in spring 1979.
 - 7 Ten years later, the publisher of the 1967 book published Frans Lodewijk Pannekoek, *Prenten, Gedichten & Eenige Aantekeningen*, Baarn 1977, also in an English edition, *Prints, Poems & Some Annotations*, with illustrations of his work. Rafael Perez Estrada, *Reflexion en Pannekoek*, Cadiz 1986, on the occasion of an exhibition in Cadiz with 37 illustrations and bibliographic information. There is a great deal of autobiographical information in the interview by Bibeb, 'Etsen', *Vrij Nederland* no. 45, 25 February 1984, pp. 3-4. For Pannekoek's etchings see further notes 14, 17 and 21.
 - 8 He was helped on his way as an etcher by Jan Coenrad Nachenius and Anton Heijboer; his first teacher was the American painter Alan Schmer, with whom he lived for a year in Ibiza in 1958. See Bibeb op. cit. (note 7), p. 4, and with thanks to Maria van Berge-Gerbaud and Frans Pannekoek for much biographical information.
 - 9 Between 1972 and 1976 Charles Donker also made several prints of a dead mole, illustrated in Donker 1977, op. cit. (note 2), p. 41, and elsewhere.
 - 10 Pannekoek's drypoint inscription is largely reversed and illegible; only the words 'dood en mollig' and '9 juli 1967', added in the second state, can be read; the text on Donker's etching, 'Der Teufel nimmt gern die Gestalt einer Maus an... wird Brahms Tierleben' is cited in full in De Jongh & Schatborn, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 129-30, accompanying fig. 92.
 - 11 '16 12 1972, 7 dagen arbeid aan deze prent...en nog niet goed.' There is a clear inscription, ORRE, on the print to the right of the suspended bird, and across the top and down the left-hand side an inscription in mirror-image: 'invitation (?) of my friend Rudolf

- Lempert (?) to HUNT in his land orre... I had a most magnificent time...'
- 12 Both books were published by Erven Thomas Rap, Baarn 1977 (see note 7). Donker was disappointed by the quality of the illustrations, in duotone in the proofs. A letter Pannekoek wrote to Charles Donker around 3 March 1977 discusses the preparations for the two books.
- 13 'Mijn pers staat klaar in Montjay opgepoetst en wel en was na 6 jaar aan een droge naald ets begonnen ! en kwam er natuurlijk niet uit. Het drukken, papier te nat, te droog ?! te weinig druk ? Het vilt te oud ? God weet het alleen, het zal me toch weer moeten lukken. ... Jij bent de enige die ik ken die het begrijpen kan wat droge naald drukken betekent, waar bijna niets opstaat.' Letter from Frans Pannekoek dated 9 December 1990 to Charles and Niovy Donker.
- 14 There is a virtually complete overview of Pannekoek's etchings in the Fondation Custodia in Paris. The exhibition in the Institut Néerlandais in 1970 led the then Custodia director, Carlos van Hasselt (1929-2009) to start collecting Pannekoek's work; he brought together more than 300 etchings, numerous drawings and a number of sketchbooks. In 1994 he gave them to the Fondation Custodia, which continued to collect Pannekoek's work. For an overview of Pannekoek's prints up to 1999: Mária van Berge-Gerbaud, Rhea Blok & Hans Buijs, *Acquisitions 1994-1999, Collection Frits Lugt*, Paris 2000, pp. 84-97. The dossier with a selection of his prints announced in it, by Peter Schatborn and Maria van Berge-Gerbaud, will be published in 2010, at the same time as the exhibition *Frans Pannekoek – Prenten uit de Frits Lugt collectie* in the Rembrandt House Museum in Amsterdam (26 June-3 October 2010).
- 15 'Ik ben geen Charles Donker. Daar werd ik wel 's mee vergeleken omdat we samen een tentoonstelling hebben gehad. Mijn werk is veel zachter. Er werd gedacht dat mijn werk te veel zou worden weggedrukt door de sterke zwarte kant van Donker, die een heel knappe ets is. Maar het wordt niet weggedrukt. Ik ben een vlinder. Hij zit op de aarde, zit aan de aarde vast.' See interview by Bibeb, op. cit. (note 7), p. 4.
- 16 'Ik ben een koortsachtig geïnspireerd ademloos periodiek werker (ook schilder) onder hoogspanning en Charles is een stabiele continue vakman, die voort werkt door weer en wind aan zijn sublieme oeuvre, meest etsen.' Letter from Frans Pannekoek dated 22 October 2009.
- 17 Ibid.: 'I always work breathlessly towards something, something invisible that is only in my head, which is why most of my prints, at least the drypoints, so that I usually only reach the pinnacle after 10 prints, sometimes even later, so they are often monotypes.' ('Ik werk altijd ademloos naar iets toe, iets onzichtbaars wat alleen in mijn kop zit, vandaar dat de meeste van mijn prenten, althans de droge naalden, zodat slechts na meestal 10 drukken ik het hoogtepunt bereik, soms nog later, dus zijn het vaak monotypes.')
- 18 With thanks to Peter van Poppel for the information about Selma van Leusden-Cornewal (1927-94), who studied calligraphy with the painter J.H. Moesman, a friend of Willem van Leusden. Van Cornewal took care of Van Leusden after the death of his wife, and subsequently married him. For twenty-seven years she did the calligraphy for the University of Utrecht's degree certificates (some 6,000 in all). Selma also supplied Donker with the live mice that he fed, very reluctantly, to the young long-eared owl he looked after for a while; see his interview with Betty van Garrel in the *Haagse Post* of 20 October 1971, pp. 93-94.
- 19 Donker had previously depicted the North Sea crab with shadow in a much sketchier manner in a large drypoint etching (380 x 295 mm); the artist still has a preliminary study for it in watercolour, dated 1965.
- 20 Two unique proofs of the first two states were donated to the Rijksprentenkabinet in 2009 in honour of Wouter Kloek. The proof of the first state (RP-P-2009-1000), in which only the crab has been etched, was shown in the retrospective of Charles Donker's work in het Centraal Museum, Utrecht, in 1976, no. 88. On the proof of the second state of the etching (RP-P-2009-1001), to which the box has been added, a hinge has been drawn on the edge, upper right, in what appears to be ink. In the third and final state, cross-hatching has been used, among other things, to deepen and intensify the shadows in the box and around the edge.
- 21 Letter from Frans Pannekoek dated 22 October 2009. The other etching, *A Crab for Yannick*, 1999 (etching and drypoint, 119 x 114 mm), which is dedicated to his son Yannick, then nine, shows a moving crab with its claws extended in front of it.
- 22 On this collection, see 'Prenten van Frans Pannekoek' in J. W. Niemeijer et al., 'De Amsterdamse Prentkring. Een keuze uit zeventien particuliere verzamelingen.', *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* 89/2, pp. 1-88, esp. pp. 80-82.

