



Acquisitions

Transfer of Prints and Drawings from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) to the Rijksprentenkabinet

• JACQUELINE DE RAAD •

In 2008 six thousand two hundred and fifty-two prints and drawings were transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) to the Rijksprentenkabinet. This was a selection from the forty thousand works on paper in the ICN collection. The transfer laid the foundation for the collection of prints and drawings from the period after the Second World War to the beginning of the 1980s, and is in line with the Rijksprentenkabinet's policy of building up a representative and indexed overview of Dutch prints and drawings. Together with photography, this collection will play an important role in the 20th-century exhibits in the New Rijksmuseum.

Work by two hundred or so artists was selected from a period spanning around fifty years, with the emphasis on works from the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The selection included works by Constant, Corneille, Anton Rooskens, Lotti van der Gaag, Jaap Mooij, Anton Heijboer, Ger Lataster, Dick Casseé, Jan Montijn, Carel Visser, Armando, Pieter Holstein, Co Westerik, Sigurdur Gudmundsson, Rene Daniëls, Henk Visch and others. The extensive collection of 20th-century works on paper held by the ICN, from which the Rijksprentenkabinet was able to choose, has many faces. This diversity is reflected in the Rijksprentenkabinet's choice and is a direct consequence of the way in which the collection has been put together. First and foremost the collection consists of gifts and legacies. Sizeable artists' estates like those of Leo Gestel, Dolf Henkes, Cesar Domela Nieuwenhuis, Jan Lavies and quite recently Lucebert, which were given to the State, went to the ICN and its predecessors, the Dienst Verspreide Rijkscollecties (Office for Dispersed State-Owned Collections) and the Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst (Netherlands Office of Fine Arts). The collection was expanded enor-

mously in 1987 when the works of art acquired through the Visual Artists Programme (BKR), a scheme to purchase works of art and applied art objects with the aim of decorating government buildings, were transferred by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This had already happened before, with works that came from the BKR's predecessor, the Contraprestatie. Alongside works originating from the BKR there are also prints and drawings in the Rijksprentenkabinet's selection that ended up in the national collection by way of commissions. One example is the 'Delta Plan Commissions'. In 1959 thirty-eight graphic artists were asked to make works of art about the Delta Works. Those who took part included Harry van Kruiningen, Rein Draijer and Henk Huig. And finally there are purchases by the State, another important part of the collection. These are works on paper that were purchased by the Dutch State between 1932 and 1992. 'The complaint that the Government shows little interest in contemporary art and contemporary artists has been heard,' said Minister of Culture Jan Terpstra in 1932. Terpstra's statement preceded a period in which there was a volte face in

the government's involvement with modern art. The Dutch government gradually began to give structural support to contemporary art, in the first instance in the form of commissions to artists. The government asked them to make works of art to brighten up and decorate public buildings. Although the amount allocated from the national budget was intended exclusively for commissions, it was soon being used for purchases of existing works of art. To begin with this happened rather conservatively, with a time lapse, because the purchasing committee thought that modern art was only worth buying ten years after it had been made. This idea weighed less heavily in the acquisition of prints. Work on paper was actively collected from 1937 onwards, and on occasion purchased straight from young contemporary graphic artists – at that time from artists

such as Aart van Dobbenburgh, M.C. Escher, Ap Sok and Kuno Brinks.

The transfer of guardianship of a part of the collection of works on paper to the Rijksprentenkabinet was prompted in part by the ICN's policy of disposing of parts of its collection in order to create a core collection. Another important consideration is the desire to make the collection more visible. The ICN itself does not have an exhibition facility. Now that they are part of the Rijksprentenkabinet collection, the prints and drawings can be consulted for study purposes and will be shown to the public in changing exhibits in the New Rijksmuseum.

LITERATURE:

F. Kuyvenhoven, *De Staat koopt kunst. De geschiedenis van de collectie 20ste-eeuwse kunst van het ministerie van OCW 1932-1992*, Amsterdam / Leiden 2007.

I ANTON HEYBOER (SABANG 1924-DEN ILP 2005)

Self-portrait, 1956

Etching, coloured with gouache, 296 x 242 mm

Signed and dated lower right outside the plate mark: Anton Heyboer 1956
épreuve d'artiste

There are numerous self-portraits among the works transferred from the ICN, including this one by Anton Heyboer dated 1956. Heyboer portrayed himself standing, probably in a studio. He has an intense look and is concentrating on something outside the picture, probably a mirror. The first things we notice are the enormous hands holding something. The dark area between the hands suggests a sketchpad or a board on which he is drawing. The print dates from the time when Heyboer was developing his 'system', an individual and entirely personal philosophical system that he created as a work-life plan. Mentally scarred by the war, this system let Heyboer keep a grip on life. In 1943 his forced labour in the Prenzlauer Berg labour camp in Berlin, from which he returned seriously ill, was one of the determinative experiences in his life. In 1951 he spent some months in a hospital in Santpoort. Afterwards he tried to pick up the threads of his life as best he could, first in Haarlem and later in Amsterdam. In 1961 he decided to settle permanently in Den Ilp, where he led a life of seclusion.

Heyboer developed an individual idiom in his work that he alone may have understood. In the etchings from the 1950s and 60s the same patterns and subjects recur time and again: crisscrossed lines, numbers, hairless, stylized figures and snippets of writing. They are personal reflections in words and images, in which such themes as suffering and innocence are key. In every etching he expressed an emotion within his established framework. To Heyboer, etching and making collages was a kind of survival strategy, a form of consciousness-raising that made life tangible and meaningful. This allowed him to rid himself of his past and his own origins. What's more the technique of etching, the handling of the plate and the scoring and biting was the most fitting way to make his reality known.

LITERATURE:

J.L. Locher, *Anton Heyboer*, The Hague 1967.
J.L. Locher, *Anton Heyboer*, Amsterdam 1976.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008
(inv. no. RP-P-2008-104).



2 LUCEBERT (AMSTERDAM 1924-ALKMAAR)

Road Safety, 1956

Pencil, watercolour and gouache, 307 x 395 mm

Signed and dated lower right: Lucebert '56

Road Safety is one of the sixty-nine works on paper by Lucebert transferred from the ICN to the Rijksprentenkabinet. The playful and associative nature of this gouache is closely related to the pictorial idiom championed by the Cobra painters. Initially Lucebert was known primarily as a poet and it was in that capacity that he was associated with Cobra. As an artist he wanted to maintain his autonomy and not be linked to a group of artists or a movement, a position that suited his experimental attitude. 'Working experimentally' is the much quoted and by now well-known phrase he used to give expression to what was so essential to him. 'I paint everything that comes into my head, I paint and draw anything on anything, I value all opinions equally, I favour no particular subject and I do not strive for syntheses. I'm quite happy to accommodate contrasts and when they oppose one another I do not offer resistance. I keep out of it and enjoy the freedom that only they give me, my paintings, my poems, those joyful playgrounds where seesaws don't drive out the swings, where deserts and great oceans converge in sandpits.'

Lucebert did not start to paint in oils until the year he drew *Road Safety*; it was something that he had little opportunity to pursue in previous years because he could not afford it. Long before this, though, he drew continually. He began as a child and in his early years produced many comic strip and cartoon-like drawings. In the 1950s Lucebert developed a completely individual drawing style which reveals an enormous freedom and light-heartedness, producing drawings where the possibilities of the pictorial vocabulary and the experimental approach to his material appear limitless. He often allows a range of human, animal and fantasy beings to make an appearance in a pattern of confused surfaces, dots or lines in a lively, sometimes deliberately nervous and improvising hand. This is also evident in *Road Safety*, where people-like figures on bicycles and road signs inhabit a strange world built up of rhythmical lines and surfaces.

LITERATURE:

- J.C. Jensen, *Lucebert schilder*, Nijmegen 2001.
 T. den Boon, J. Blanken, S. Héman et al., *Lucebert. Schilder Dichter Fotograaf*, Nijmegen / Schiedam 2007.
 L. Netel, E. Rodrigo, S. Vermaat, *Schenking Lucebert: schilderijen en werken op papier uit de collectie van het Instituut Collectie Nederland*, Zutphen / Rijswijk 2007.

PROVENANCE:

- Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008
 (inv. no. RP-T-2008-50).



3 WOUT VAN HEUSDEN (ROTTERDAM 1896-ROTTERDAM 1982)

Fusillade du poète, 1957

Etching and aquatint, 498 x 420 mm

Signed and dated bottom right outside the plate mark: Wout v. Heusden '57

Number 4 / 20

In a period spanning from just after the war until 1962 Van Heusden concentrated almost exclusively on making etchings. Most of his paintings were done in the periods before and afterwards. In almost twenty years he built up an impressive printed oeuvre, striking in its ever-increasing abstraction in the mid-1950s. His oeuvre cannot be seen in isolation from the developments in the art of his day. Like many others he began increasingly to break away from recognizable narrative reality and developed an entirely individual, almost abstract idiom. The influence of Surrealism in his prints is unmistakable. He admired Max Ernst and Miro, but was an equally great lover of old masters such as Dürer and Hercules Seghers. 'They never entirely abandoned me,' he said of the etchings by Seghers, whose prints were rediscovered in Surrealist circles after the war.

Fusillade du poète gives the impression of an indefinable cosmic space, in which the circle at upper left suggests the presence of the sun or the moon. The composition is made up of a fusion of spots and shades that came about by chance during the etching process and deliberately chosen, sharply indicated forms and lines. The seemingly accidental tonal passages in the composition were created with several layers of aquatint. Van Heusden attached great importance to the *écriture automatique* or automatic writing so essential to Surrealism, and most loved prints in which, in his own words, 'much has come about automatically'. According to fellow artists he had developed an unrivalled etching technique, experimenting with variations on the four basic techniques he used: etching, drypoint, aquatint and *verniss-mou* (soft-ground etching). He was described as 'an alchemist who used an unfathomable recipe and method'. To him the printing process was a ritual in which he employed all kinds of inventions. He used different materials – net was one – which he pushed into the etching ground to create a particular pattern. He mixed the black ink with oil paint to create an off-black, and he always printed his work on cream paper; he did not like pure black and white.

Van Heusden commented in his work on everything that he perceived as threatening in real life. His vision of the future of the planet was not optimistic. In his prints he devoted himself to his inner world, a world that encompasses pitch-black mountains, desolate places, flying mythical creatures, poets, horsemen and birds.

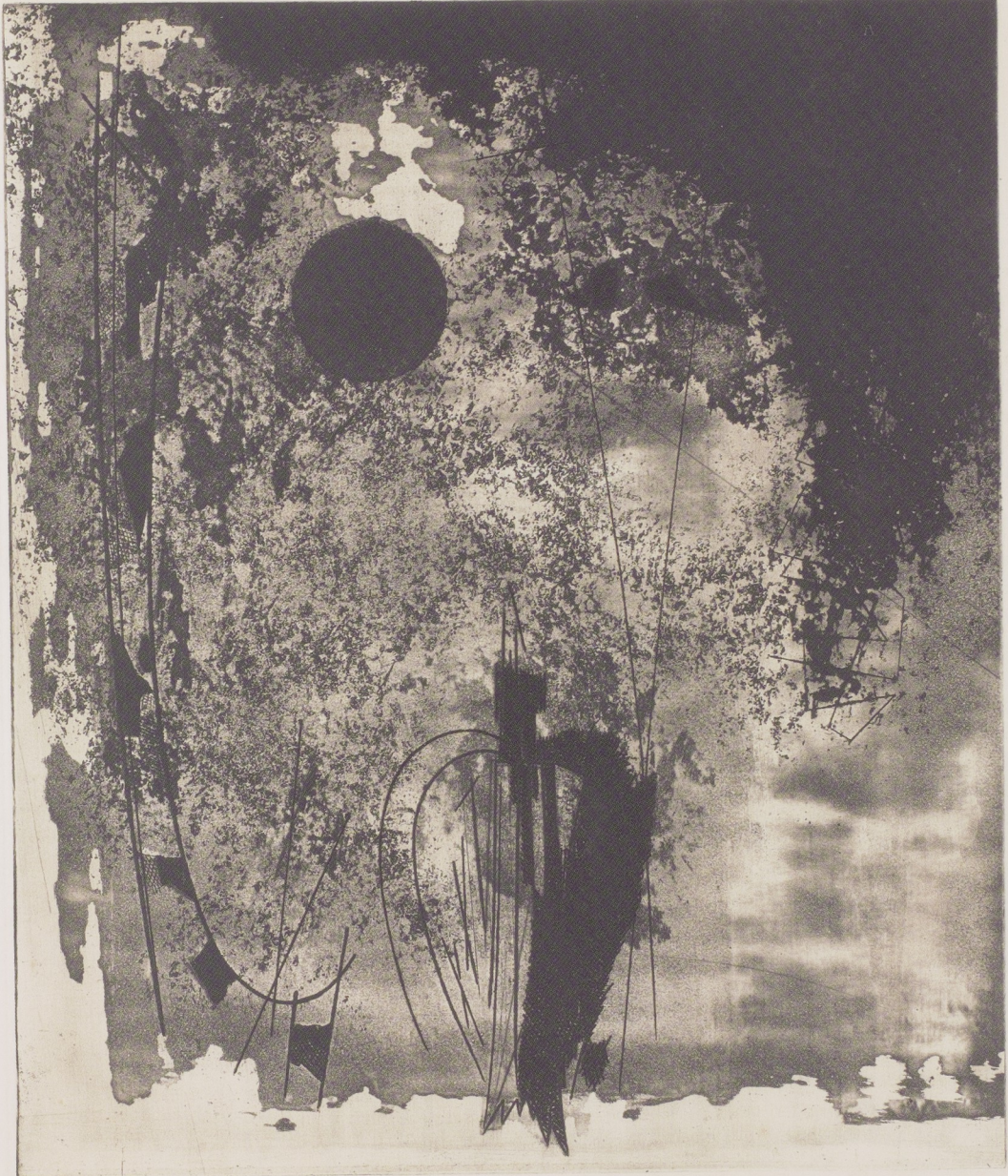
LITERATURE:

J.L. Locher, *Wout van Heusden*, Doorn 1978.F. Stiemer, *Wout van Heusden. Graficus en schilder in Rotterdam 1896-1982*, Rotterdam 1992.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008

(inv. no. RP-P-2008-690).



1952 No. 1000/1001

4 CAREL VISSER (PAPENDRECHT 1928)

Untitled, 1957-1960

Print, 920 x 625 mm

Signed and dated bottom right: '57-'60 C. Visser

Like Couzijn, Carel Visser regards working with prints as a welcome change from sawing, cutting, bending and welding – operations that are usually involved in the creation of his sculptures. His graphic oeuvre consists almost exclusively of woodcuts, always printed on Japanese paper. The wafer-thin, transparent character of these works is in sharp contrast to the weight and magnitude of his constructed sculptures. Visser must have made hundreds of woodcuts. Sixteen have now been added to the Rijksprentenkabinet collection in the transfer from the ICN.

Visser's entry into art was through drawing. 'I always drew a lot; when I was seventeen I drew lots of deer, horses, birds and insects. After that, at eighteen, I started to make figures in wood and iron.' In the 1950s Visser began increasingly to develop as a sculptor, but drawing remained important. The drawings from this period are not straightforward preliminary studies for sculptures, but rather explorations of sculptural possibilities in a powerful linear hand. In 1954 he started to make prints, initially in drypoint. He soon moved on to woodcuts, a technique that suited him better. Like his sculptures, the woodcuts are structured arrangements of geometric shapes. These arrangements are the direct result of the way in which these shapes are repeatedly piled up or reflected. Visser made the early woodcuts in two ways – in the usual manner, where the composition is printed off from one woodblock in one go, or by repeatedly stamping the sheet of paper with a single matrix. The latter method produces unique impressions. His woodcuts always have a great simplicity and clarity. There is room inside this clarity for the irregular, for apparent disorder. In part this is implicit in the chosen material, the hard, stubborn character of the wood with its grain and frayed edges that serves as the basis for the prints, and in part in the instinctive way the artist links and combines a limited repertoire of geometric shapes. This is manifested most clearly in the unique stamped prints.

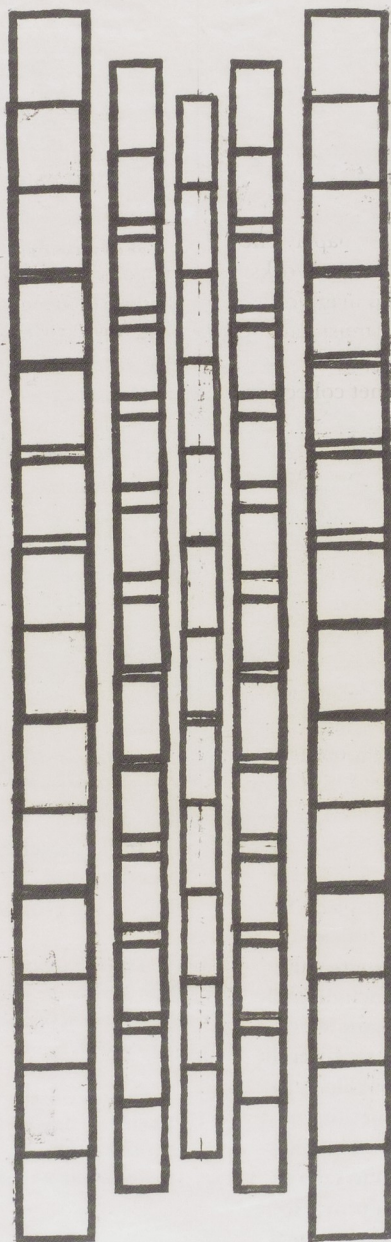
LITERATURE:

J.L. Locher, *Carel Visser beelden-tekeningen-grafiek*, Vlaardingen 1972.C. Blotkamp, *Carel Visser*, Utrecht 1989.K. Broos, *Carel Visser: houtsneden*, Brummen 1999.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008

(inv. no. RP-P-2008-109).



37-60 A. 1777

5 WESSEL COUZIYN (AMSTERDAM 1912-HAARLEM 1984)

Composition II, 1960

Etching and drypoint, 306 x 340 mm

Signed lower right outside the plate edge: Couzijn

Number 1 of 6

Wessel Couzijn made many preliminary drawings for his sculptures. Alongside these, he also made works on paper that can be regarded as works of art in their own right. The early drawings in charcoal or crayon and the etchings and lithographs he made from around 1960 belong to this group. In the second half of the 1970s Couzijn surprised many people with a set of large drawings – hastily-made, almost transparent pencil drawings on paper – that were in no way reminiscent of the expressive, emotionally-charged figures that had propelled him to a unique position in post-war Dutch sculpture.

Couzijn's career as a sculptor took off in the early 1950s after a somewhat difficult start. He was a citizen of the world from a young age. He had spent much of his childhood in New York and returned there in 1941, fleeing as a Jew from a war-torn Europe. Shortly before that he had lived for a while in Paris, where a grant allowed him to study and where he became acquainted with the sculpture of Rodin and Maillol. The oeuvres of two sculptors, Zadkine and Lipchitz, who had likewise fled Europe, attracted his attention in New York. Couzijn visited Lipchitz in his New York workshop in 1953, a visit that made a profound impression on him. The drama in Lipchitz's work inspired by his wartime experiences touched a chord in him. Couzijn's designs for several monuments date from that period, including the merchant navy memorial in Rotterdam, which was never built. In them he broke away from the traditional sculpture that was fashionable in the Netherlands at that time. His introduction to the sculpture of influential artists like Lipchitz, Zadkine and Moore encouraged him to take a new step in his development as a sculptor. He began to experiment with then unconventional materials and techniques and made designs with fanciful projections in modelling wax and with random found materials such as iron, stainless steel, branches and paper. A similar development was evident at that time in the work of artists like Carel Visser and Shinkichi Tajiri, who had already made pieces from scrap in 1950.

Couzijn had his first solo exhibition at the Rotterdam Kunstkring at the end of 1958. Eighteen months later he was honoured at the Venice Biennale, where the Dutch pavilion was almost entirely given over to his oeuvre. Among the works on display was the model for *Corporate Entity*, Couzijn's magnum opus, which was erected in front of Unilever's new office in Rotterdam in 1963. The Unilever commission took more than three years to complete. It took him a long time to finish the final design for this gigantic 'winged' sculpture and the technical execution was extremely complicated too. It was while he was working on this huge commission that Couzijn began to make prints, initially in drypoint and later as lithographs. *Composition II* dates from 1960 and is one of Couzijn's first prints. The hand is totally dynamic; the lines, interrupted here and there, have a compelling presence and at the same time a hugely poetic quality. The print has a tension perceptible in many of Couzijn's sculptures. The strained balance between the closed shape which is broken and seeps out into the surroundings, or as critic Jan Eijkelboom once put it, 'the tension between freedom and restraint, between flying and standing on the ground, between heaven and earth.'

LITERATURE:

K.E. Schuurman, *Wessel Couzijn*, Amsterdam 1967.
I. Boelema, A. Overbeek (ed.), *Couzijn; beeldhouwer*, Weesp 1986.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008
(inv. no. RP-P-2008-99).



6 CONSTANT (AMSTERDAM 1920-UTRECHT 2005)

Artificial Landscape | *Landscape on Wheels*, 1961

Drypoint, 495 x 598 mm

Signed lower right outside the plate mark: Constant

Number 18 / 20

Artificial Landscape or *Landscape on Wheels* is one of a set of seven drypoint prints that Constant made in 1961. It was at a time when he was moving away from painting and becoming increasingly enthralled by the phenomenon of the big city and the social climate within it. Many of the prints from this period relate to New Babylon, Constant's enduring reference to the process of creating the ideal city. New Babylon was a vision and a scenario for the future, an ideal image of a city in which conditions were created for a free, creative way of life for all. New Babylon was based on the supposition that advancing automation was ushering in an era in which machines would be able to do all the non-creative work of a society and there would be plenty of room for man to play – *homo ludens*. 'Adjacent and inter-linking spaces will provide the opportunity to create an infinite variety of spheres that make it possible for the citizens to wander around and enable their frequent chance meetings,' wrote Constant in the *Internationale Situationniste* magazine in 1959.

Sometimes the prints complement the scale models that Constant made in this period – scale models of his ideal city, constructed in aluminium, iron wire and Plexiglas. Occasionally the prints have a more indirect relationship with New Babylon, as is the case here. The wheels and the cogs stand out in this etching. They recur in the scale models, in the large painting *Artificial Landscape* of 1963 and again in a set of lithographs with the same title dated 1965. The composition of the etching *Artificial Landscape* treads the line between formlessness and figuration. Objects are indicated with caricature symbols and there is the suggestion of an architectural space. The hand is playful, ragged and incomplete; the composition is dynamic and powerful.

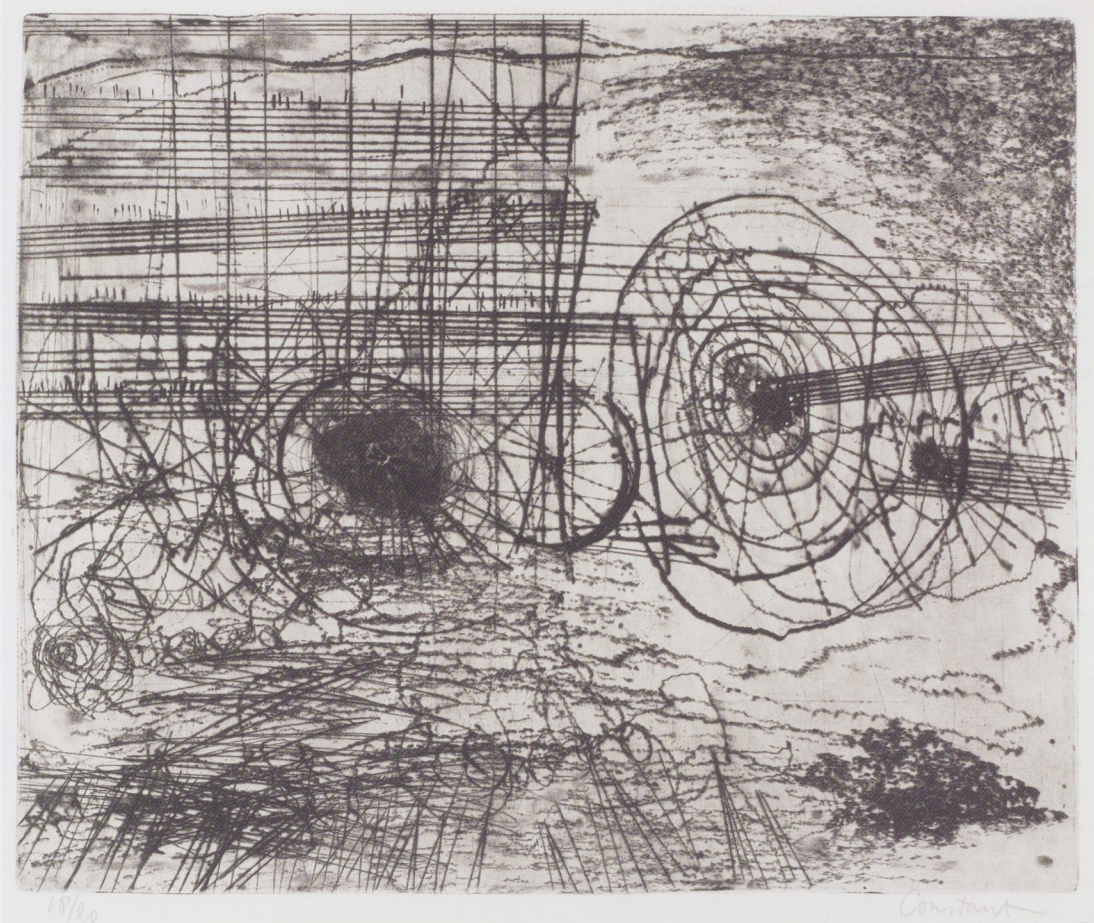
LITERATURE:

H. van Haaren, *Constant*, Amsterdam 1967.F. Kelk, *Constant, een illustratie van vrijheid*, Amsterdam 1974.P. Dagen and T. van der Horst, *Constant grafiek*, Zwolle 2004.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008

(inv. no. RP-P-2008-97).



7 WIM SCHUHMACHER (AMSTERDAM 1894-AMSTERDAM 1986)

Self-portrait, 1966

Pen and brush and Indian ink, 480 x 360 mm

Signed lower right: W. Schuhmacher

Wim Schuhmacher made self-portraits from his earliest childhood until his death, save only during the period between 1930 and 1940. This portrait shows the artist at the age of seventy-two. It is a quiet, peaceful portrait without distracting attributes – the gaze is serious. Schumacher used a magnifying shaving mirror for his self-portraits in order to get as close as possible to his skin. This is strikingly evident in the portraits with their extreme drawing-like detail. The folds of skin in the face and neck are meticulously depicted so that it seems as though the artist wanted to get right into his pores.

There are self-portraits in oils, but Schumacher preferred to capture his likeness in Indian ink on Japanese paper. At some point he discovered a silky, highly absorbent type of Japanese paper in Paris, and began to experiment on it with varying concentrations of ink and water. He built up the drawing with watercolour brushes, which he used dry, with a great deal of patience and almost painful precision. Initially it came to nothing – as he said himself – but in the war years he finally made a series of remarkable self-portraits. ‘The war brought me this patience. It was very quiet. A tiny little place with a tiny little window... Then I took a look at myself. I learned an awful lot. Not just brushwork, I also got to know this strange man. His name was Schuhmacher.’ In employing his meticulous Indian ink technique Schumacher drew inspiration from Chinese drawing and from the subtle gradations of shade in fifteenth-century silverpoint drawing. He also often found inspiration for his compositions in examples from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European art. He loved Albrecht Dürer, Quinten Metsys and Dieric Bouts.

The development Schuhmacher underwent as an artist is reflected in the series of self-portraits. To begin with they are heavy and dark, in a style akin to the expressionism of the Bergen School. In 1927 the portraits start to become lighter and more peaceful and the palette changes to silver tones. Schuhmacher began his work in ink on paper; the last self-portrait using this technique is dated 1977. Schuhmacher always took reality as

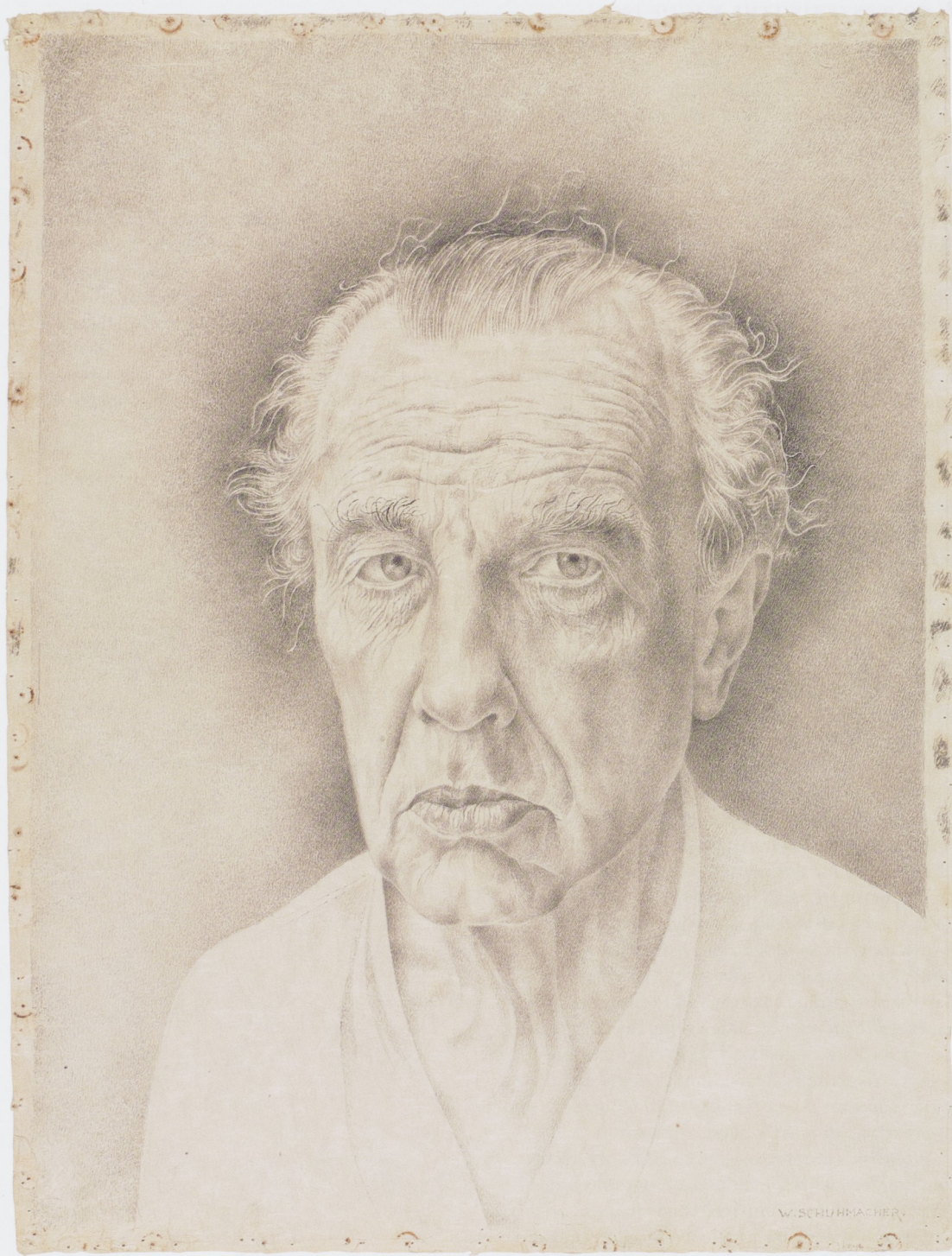
his starting point, but his paintings and drawings are more than a technically perfect record of the world. ‘I elevate the reality into what I want myself,’ he once said. His work often has a rather dream-like and otherworldly atmosphere. He increasingly discovered the possibilities of minimizing colour and the use of black and white. ‘There are all colours between black and white. This is obviously an illusion, but I see it. I adore black and white and those intermediate shades.’

LITERATURE:

J. van Geest, *Wim Schuhmacher. De Meester van het Grijs*, Arnhem 1991.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008
(inv. no. RP-T-2008-54).



W. SCHUMACHER

8 CO WESTERIK (THE HAGUE 1924)

Self-portrait with Hand in Glass, 1981

Lithograph, 183 x 254 mm

Signed and dated below centre (on the stone): Westerik 1981

Signed and dated lower left: Westerik 1981

Number 15 / 40

Westerik regards the portraits that he made of himself as explorations, intense self-reflections that he does not consider part of his core oeuvre. Most of the self-portraits are drawings. Over the years he made sixty or so, usually on pages of sketchbooks on which he captured his likeness in pencil, ink or watercolour. The printed portraits and the portraits in oils have a more formal status; they are portraits which have their own added value. *Self-portrait with Hand in Glass* of 1981 is one such. Westerik portrayed himself while he drew – something he does quite often. He looks to the front, to where the mirror is, and his eyes appear to be searching, inquiringly and critically. The print has a distinctly ‘portrait-like’ character in the sense that it was executed with great concern for detail in the delicate and questing lines so characteristic of his oeuvre. The space around him is empty, but not entirely. In the upper left corner a hand sticking into a glass appears from above and there are faintly visible outlines of a second glass to the left of it. This addition raises questions and lends the portrait an element of mystery. Alienation like this is typical of Westerik’s oeuvre. The point of departure for this oeuvre is always an event, a feeling or an emotion from everyday life. ‘We are nourished by the smallest things,’ says Westerik. Everything starts with an image he forms in his mind, an experience or observation from everyday life that makes a lasting impression and is captured in an image. Little events that he magnifies in such a way that they seem to go beyond reality. His work is always about people and their experiences and their feelings of loneliness, oppression, joy, sorrow and consolation.

Westerik’s graphic oeuvre consists of almost two hundred works: etchings, lithographs and silkscreen prints. Compared to his paintings, where he spends a long time working layer upon layer and which he regards as true ‘structures’, he sees the drawings as spontaneous explorations – discoveries on paper. By comparison to painting, printing is ‘heavy’ work in the physical sense,

says Westerik. ‘With lithographs it is the lengthy process of graining the stones, which then have to be lifted on and off the press. Using a large leather roller to spread viscous black printing ink on a marble plate, then rolling the stone on and hanging on to the press with all your weight to achieve the right pressure, it’s a world away from watercolours and oils. But I can think of nothing more delightful than drawing thin fine lines with a piece of chalk on a meticulously grained stone. The chalk offers no resistance and almost seems to roll over the surface of its own accord.’

LITERATURE:

J. van Slooten et al., *Co Westerik 1946-1999*, Haarlem / Eindhoven 1999.J. van Es, *Co Westerik: zelfportretten 1946-1999*, Haarlem 1999.V. Baar and W. van Toorn, *Co Westerik Grafiek*, Nijmegen 2006.C. Westerik, V. Baar, K. Fens, *Co Westerik*, The Hague / Rotterdam 2006.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008

(inv. no. RP-P-2008-688).



9 JAN SCHOONHOVEN (DELFT 1914-DELFT 1994)

Fear, 1981

Lithograph, 1210 x 810 mm

Signed and dated lower right: Schoonhoven 1981

Number 28 / 30

Organization is essential in Schoonhoven's oeuvre. The reliefs and drawings from the 1960s and 70s are characterized by a simple arrangement of horizontals and verticals and the neutralizing of colour and form. The works are monochrome and almost weightless. The drawings are built up of a repetition of lines, squares, dots and crosses placed on the paper in a balanced and rhythmic composition. Organization and discipline also underpinned Schoonhoven's daily life. From 1946 until his retirement in 1979 he worked for the Post Office in The Hague. When he got home from the office he drew and worked undisturbed on his reliefs, year in year out.

This lithograph is quite an unusual work in his oeuvre because it bears a title that is far from neutral and that directs and influences the viewer's perception of it. As a rule Schoonhoven's works are numbered, not titled. He was a born bureaucrat and kept an accurate inventory of his work.

Around 1978 a new phase dawned in the development of his oeuvre. The high point of the Zero period lay behind him and he had come to a dead end with formalism in that he had taken it to its extreme. Drawing became tremendously important again. In the drawings from the end of the 1970s and early 80s expression is given more scope and Schoonhoven appears to have found a greater freedom in his handling of pen and brush. It is as if he is looking for chaos, yet always within an orderly basic structure that remains the point of departure for each new drawing. Even though they may sometimes give the opposite impression, Schoonhoven's drawings, lithographs and silkscreen prints are always accomplished in an entirely deliberate way. 'I do strive for harmony on paper ... It may look like utter chaos, but there is always a balance. I'm always trying to get things to balance. In that sense I always like to say that one proposition cancels out the other.'

LITERATURE:

F. Bool, W. Beeren et al., *Jan Schoonhoven retrospectief: tekeningen en reliëfs*, The Hague 1984.C. van der Laan, *Jan Schoonhoven 10 jaar tekenen 1975-1984*, Delft 1985.J. Wesseling, *Schoonhoven: beeldend kunstenaar*, The Hague / Amsterdam 1990.

PROVENANCE:

Transferred from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) 2008

(inv. no. RP-P-2008-689).



10 ERIK ANDRIESSE (BUSSUM 1957-AMSTERDAM 1993)

Autopsy of a Young Hippopotamus, 1990

Black and coloured chalk, graphite, felt tip pen, red ink,

730 x 1100 mm

Signed lower right: Erik Andriesse 23-8-90

This drawing precedes an enormous painting of the same subject in acrylic on panel (125 x 250 cm). In this painting a greyish pink hippopotamus stands out against a black background painted with broad, lively brushstrokes. Attention is focused on the point where the cadaver has been cut open, in part because of the scarlet blood tracing a path for itself as it drips from the dead beast and in part because of the dramatic effect created by the texture of the panel. In 1990 Andriesse went to work in Amsterdam University's Zoological Museum. Fascinated by nature, he turned his observant gaze on natural phenomena of all kinds, studied the anatomy of skulls and bones and captured them in sketches. He was allowed to attend the autopsy of a hippopotamus that had been crushed to death by its mother shortly after birth and he depicted the scene with analytical precision tempered with compassion and great vitality. Compared with the painting, the drawing is simple in design and quiet in tone. Andriesse placed the hippo in the centre with boundless space around it. Presumably the beast is lying, yet because of the undefined three-dimensionality it almost looks as if it is floating and could take off at any moment.

Andriesse did not make still lifes of his subjects in a definable space. And the effect is heightened by the impact of the contrast between the fine, delicate lines with which the hippopotamus was drawn and the blood red that erupts from the animal and fans out over its body.

Andriesse's oeuvre has a limited but nonetheless consistently diverse theme. Flowers – amaryllises, lilies and sunflowers – skulls, skeletons, marine creatures and shells are the subjects that he drew and painted in various versions and combinations. Nature and the cycle of growth, blossoming, decay and death must have fascinated him. He was not concerned with an obvious, simple Vanitas symbolism, but rather with putting our transience into perspective. The perishable being, like the hippo, for example, is rendered with immense vitality and 'liveliness'. Life and death often come together in strange ways in Andriesse's oeuvre.

It is not so much his choice of subjects that is striking as the way in which he depicted them. He saw them as a springboard from which to explore and exploit his artistic capabilities. The scale of the subjects put on canvas, panel or paper is often huge – as we see, for instance, in the monumental 'portraits' of amaryllises. Andriesse placed his subjects outside a recognizable context and brought them to life with an incredible technique in which painting and drawing often intermingle. He was able to convey the texture of his subjects – the velvetiness of a petal, the brittleness of a bone, the fleshiness of a corpse – with great subtlety, combined with deft, assured brushwork, a detailed, sometimes almost calligraphic hand and a dazzling use of colour.

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