



Print Room Acquisitions

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I MASTER OF THE LARGE PASSION

Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, c. 1470-90
Engraving, 284 x 209 mm

Fifteenth-century engravings seldom appear on the market, and certainly not in the exceptional condition of this recently acquired German print. Sold in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most early prints formerly held in private collections subsequently entered public collections. At the onset of the twentieth century, the present engraving of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* was still in the art collection of the Oettingen-Wallersteins, a German aristocratic family in Maihingen, as confirmed by the collector's stamp on the reverse. The print was recently offered for sale by another private German collector.

The engraving belongs to a six-part series titled *The Passion of Christ*, produced by an anonymous sixteenth-century, south-German engraver by whom no other works are known. The powerful, somewhat rigid style displays the influence of Martin Schongauer. The German origin is additionally reinforced by watermarks found in impressions of his prints. In the older

literature, these prints were often presented as anonymous works. In the upcoming compendium of anonymous northern engravings made before 1500 (*New Hollstein Series*, planned for 2029), the maker will be given the name of convenience 'Master of the Large Passion'.

What makes this series special, apart from its great rarity, is the innovative concept. A traditional Passion series typically comprises twelve or fourteen individual small-scale prints, each representing one scene. By contrast, the Master of the Large Passion engraved an impressive eighteen episodes of the Passion narrative on six large copper plates. Each plate shows one large main scene in the foreground and two related moments in the background. In the present print, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem is the central scene, with the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet subtly integrated in the architecture in the background. This combining of scenes underscores the master's narrative and technical skill. The large size of the prints enhances the visual and thematic impact.

At least two copper plates from this series later entered the possession of Israhel van Meckenem (c. 1445-1503), a goldsmith and engraver known to commonly rework and reissue previously existing plates. By softening the faces and upgrading the figures' robes with a more luxurious brocade, Van Meckenem was able to achieve a more refined, 'Flemish' look. On one plate, *The Lamentation* (presented with the Resurrection and Descent into Hell), Meckenem also added his monogram. An impression of this reworked second state is preserved in the Rijksmuseum (inv. no. RP-P-OB-966). Whether Van Meckenem possessed and reissued all six plates is uncertain, though it is likely he did: publishing an incomplete Passion series would not have been profitable. Other impressions bearing his monogram have probably been lost.

The present engraving of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* is a rare impression made from the copper plate before it was reworked. The two other surviving impressions of this first state, today in Berlin and London, are in poorer condition. Subsequent states of the print are also known, with Christ's mantle and face retouched in the second state and more drastic changes and additional hatching applied in the third. However, these alterations do not appear to have been made by Van Meckenem. This suggests that, even before entering his possession, the plates were possibly already reworked by another engraver.

JZ

LITERATURE:

Max Lehrs, *Geschichte und kritischer Katalog des deutschen, niederländischen und französischen Kupferstichs im xv. Jahrhundert*, 9 vols., Vienna 1908-34, vol. 4, p. 223, no. 17
 Max Lehrs, 'Der deutsche und niederländische Kupferstich des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts in den kleineren Sammlungen', *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 11 (1888), pp. 47-65, 213-39, esp. p. 62, no. 132
 Johann David Passavant, *Le Peintre-Graveur, contenant l'histoire de la gravure sur bois, sur métal et auburin jusque vers la fin du xvi. siècle, l'histoire du nielle avec complément de la partie descriptive de l'essai sur les nielles du Duchesne aîné, et un catalogue supplémentaire aux estampes du xv. et xvi. siècle du peintre-graveur de Adam Bartsch*, 6 vols., Leipzig 1860-64, vol. 2, p. 217, no. 56
 Additional notes to 'Le peintre-graveur' of Bartsch; a descriptive catalogue of nearly four hundred engravings (unknown to Bartsch at the period of publication of his invaluable work) by artists of whose activities he has given a detailed account, London (A.E. Evans & Son.) 1857, no. 257

PROVENANCE:

...; Maihingen, collection of the Princes of Oettingen-Wallerstein; ...; Gießen, Germany, collection of Karl Rinn; sale, Berlin (Galerie Bassenge), 27 November 2024, no. 5162, to the museum with the support of the F.G. Waller-Fonds, 2024
 (inv. no. RP-P-2025-23).



- 2 Attributed to DOMENICO DEL BARBIERE (Florence [?] c. 1501/06-1570/71 Troyes)
Possibly after Luca Penni (c. 1500-1556)
Ten Nude Men amidst the Rocks, c. 1540-50
Engraving, 295 x 430 mm

This dramatic engraving, printed in large format, was first described circa 1900 by the French historian Félix Herbet in his authoritative study *Graveurs de l'école de Fontainebleau*. He attributed the representation to the Italian artist Domenico del Barbieri. In 1969, Henri Zerner questioned this attribution in his *Ecoles de Fontainebleau*, remarking laconically that 'le métier ne semble pas de Domenico' (the technique is unlike Domenico's). The printmaker's identity has since remained uncertain. Contrary to all other prints by Domenico's del Barbieri, which invariably bear the artist's name or monogram, the present composition is unsigned. Nevertheless, the stylistic similarities are striking. Although the overall style echoes the linear working method of Jean Mignon, Léon Davent and Antonio Fantuzzi, the production of these printmakers was solely limited to etchings, versus engravings like the present print. The image is set up in clear outlines and supplemented with tight, often slightly curved hatching, over which regular crosshatching has been added to further define the spatiality. Especially on the men's bodies, the transition from shadow to light is frequently softened by means of numerous stipples. Also noteworthy is the stylized treatment of the men's hair, rendered primarily with outlines. All these characteristics are found in Domenico del Barbieri's signed prints, including *Skeletons and Écorchés* (inv. no. RP-P-2018-567) and the *Group of Saints from Michelangelo's Last Judgement* (inv. no. RP-P-OB-34.089). In short, there is indeed every reason to attribute the print to this Italian artist.

Domenico del Barbieri is also known as Domenico Fiorentino, meaning Domenico from Florence. In 1537 and 1539, he is mentioned together with his compatriots Rosso Fiorentino and Francesco Primaticcio at Fontainebleau, the hunting lodge of the French king. There they produced frescoes and stucco works up until Rosso's death in 1540. Prior to this, Domenico del Barbieri was perhaps already living in nearby Troyes, where he married a Frenchwoman and spent the remainder of his years working as a sculptor, architect and engraver. Due to his

activity at Fontainebleau, he was also seen as a printmaker in the School of Fontainebleau. In her standard work on prints at the court of Fontainebleau (2017), Catherine Jenkins points out that the paper of Del Barbieri's prints indicates that most were printed elsewhere. Also given that he lived in Troyes, she no longer considers him a member of the Fontainebleau school.

The present engraving shows ten naked men in front of a rock formation, engaged in a heated gathering. Far left, a man clasp ing a dagger is restrained by two others. At their feet, on the right, a man lies unconscious while another next to him seemingly collapses; behind them, a sixth figure stands cowering in fear. Far right, four bystanders look on in horror. Two additional figures can be seen at the bottom of a craggy hill populated with stone buildings and trees in the distance far left. The representation's meaning remains unclear. One suggestion is that it centres on the Madness of Ajax, as described in the eponymous tragedy by Sophocles. However, other depictions of this story also include, besides the men Ajax believes he is killing, the sheep he actually slaughters, which are missing here. There exist other late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century representations of nude fighting men not evidently derived from a classical story, including Antonio Pollaiuolo's *Battle of the Naked Warriors* (inv. no. RP-P-OB-39.152) and Jean Mignon's *Combat of Naked Men* (New York, Metropolitan Museum, inv. no. 65.589). The latter print is after a design by the Italian artist Luca Penni, who may have also supplied the design for Domenico del Barbieri's engraving. This well-preserved engraving is exceedingly rare, with only five other impressions known today.

EH



LITERATURE:

Nicolaas Teeuwisse, *Ausgewählte Werke – Selected Works*, Tefaf 2024, no. 1
 Bruce Davis, *Mannerist Prints: International Style in the Sixteenth Century*, exh. cat. Los Angeles (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) 1988, pp. 168-69, no. 65
 Henri Zerner, *École de Fontainebleau: gravures*, Paris 1969, p. XXXVII
 Félix Herbet, *Les graveurs de l'école de Fontainebleau*, Amsterdam 1969, no. 13

PROVENANCE:

...; sale, Paris (Ader), 29 November 2023, no. 6; ...; Nicolaas Teeuwisse (OHG), Berlin; purchased by the museum with the support of the F.G. Waller-Fonds, 2024 (inv. no. RP-P-2024-577).

- 3 Here attributed to CORNELIS VAN DALEM (Antwerp c. 1530-1573 Bavel)
 Published by Hieronymus Cock (Antwerp 1518-1570)
Landscape with a Castle Built on Rocks, c. 1550-60
 Etching, 232 x 284 mm
 Address, lower right: *H Cock ex.*

In 1548, Hieronymus Cock founded his Antwerp publishing house In de Vier Winden, destined to become the most prestigious print production company in Europe. Cock and his wife Volcxken Diericx succeeded in building a highly diverse stock thanks to their collaboration with esteemed artists like Maarten van Heemskerck and Pieter Bruegel, and a selection of virtuoso printmakers. The discovery of a print heretofore unmentioned in the extensive literature devoted to this Antwerp publishing house is exceptional. This is the case with the recently acquired rocky landscape with castle bearing the address 'H Cock ex.' Then a relatively new subject in printmaking, landscapes formed an important part of the stock. Hieronymus Cock himself etched and published prints after landscape drawings made by his pioneering brother, Matthijs. Yet it was especially Cock's publication of *Grote Landschappen* (c. 1555), a twelve-part print series after drawings by Pieter Brueghel, that signalled the veritable breakthrough of the landscape genre as a subject for prestigious prints.

In this recently acquired etching, the rocky landscape differs markedly from those mentioned above or those by other artists specialized in landscapes published by Cock. Starting with the large bare tree on the left, our gaze continues to a jagged rock formation surmounted by a large castle. In the foreground, the road that disappears into the distance on the left leads to a long footbridge built at the foot of the rock. A number of figures walk across what looks to be a dangerous construction. The whole evokes a fanciful, almost surreal impression. The etching bears no mention of the design's creator, as was also the case with the other early landscape prints published by Cock, including his own etchings after designs by his brother Matthijs. In devising an attribution for the etching's design, only the paintings by Cornelis van Dalem offer a good starting point, when compared to other specialists known to have been active in Antwerp circa 1550-70. Rocky landscapes were the hallmark of this nobleman-painter, for which he garnered praise in Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* (1604).

Only a small number of Van Dalem's works survive, affirming the artist's predilection for jagged rock formations, trees and building structures. This is perfectly demonstrated by the most famous of his paintings, a large landscape preserved in the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen (inv. no. 3363 (OK)), comprising an imposing rock formation depicted parallel to the picture plane. A bridge traversing the base of the rock echoes the left part of the footbridge seen in the etching. An ideal comparison for the curious motif of the high-pier footbridge farther right are the high, pointed arches on Van Dalem's painted panel in Munich (Alte Pinakothek München, inv. no. 12044), dated 1565. The printmaker's name appears nowhere on the etching, while the execution bears no outright association with one of the printmakers working for Cock or the hand of the publisher himself. Possible is that the idiosyncratic Cornelis van Dalem not only designed the present etching, unique to Cock's stock, but also executed it himself. Recently, a second impression of the same etching surfaced on the art market (Jeroen Jurjens Fine Arts, *Master Prints*, 2025, cat. no. 3). This work was purchased by Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, where the aforementioned monumental painting by Van Dalem is likewise preserved.

HL

LITERATURE:
 Unpublished

PROVENANCE:
 ...; Kunsthandel A. & D. Martinez, Paris; purchased by the museum with the support of the F.G. Waller-Fonds, 2024 (inv. no. RP-P-2024-188).



4 ROELANT SAVERY (Kortrijk 1576-1639 Utrecht)

A Stream in a Rocky Landscape, 1606-08

Black chalk on two sheets of paper joined together, 192 x 304 mm

Writing in his *Schilder-boeck* of 1604, the Netherlandish artist, poet, and art theoretician Karel van Mander conjures up a wildly evocative image of the Alpine landscape. With 'stones, like ferrous icicles, hanging from the waterfall's rocks', and 'filled with the water's rushing noise, as it comes tumbling down, raging amongst shattered stones', the Alps must have seemed an unfamiliar, perhaps even exotic environment for the majority of Van Mander's readers hailing from the Low Countries. 'Who could dream up such a thing?', the writer asks in conclusion.

Van Mander's sense of wonder is echoed in this and other drawings by his compatriot Roelant Savery. On assignment for Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II between 1606 and 1608, Savery travelled to the Tyrolean Alps to observe and sketch what his biographer Joachim von Sandrart would later describe as the 'rare marvels of nature': mountains, waterfalls, pine forests, rivers, boulders and other natural features. Many of Savery's surviving Alpine views are exceedingly large in scale and embellished with coloured chalks and washes. This suggests they were executed in the studio on the basis of earlier sketches. By contrast, the present drawing employs a lighter, more spontaneous touch, giving the impression that, at least in part, it was executed *in situ*. The drawing's support – two sketchbook sheets, joined vertically at the centre – reinforces this assumption.

Savery describes the craggy rock faces, sparse vegetation and rushing waters using black chalk, in places stumped and perhaps even wetted to create, respectively, softer and darker passages. He devised the scene using a two-point perspective – a compositional device he employed with some frequency in his drawings and paintings. The centre is dominated by an imposing boulder, which, despite its heft, seems to balance somewhat precariously over a mountain stream rushing beneath it. While many of Savery's Alpine views include small-scale figures – travellers or even artists at work – this scene is entirely devoid of human presence. The unruly natural world is its sole protagonist.

Savery returned from his two-year sojourn in the Tyrolean Alps with a large number of study

sheets. These would serve as sources for the paintings, engravings, and autonomous drawings he produced throughout the remainder of his career. After his death, Savery's drawings would continue to provide inspiration and reference material for the next generation of artists. As recorded in his inventory from 1656, Rembrandt, who never travelled outside the Low Countries, owned 'een groot boeck met teeckeninghe in't Tirol van Roelant Savrij nae't leven geteeckent' (a large book with drawings drawn from life in the Tirol by Roelant Savery, fol. 36).

AM

LITERATURE:

Joaneath A. Spicer, *The Drawings of Roelandt Savery*, New Haven (dissertation Yale University) 1979, pp. 67 and 83, no. C 40 F 40

Jeroen Giltaij, *Le Cabinet d'un amateur: dessins flamands et hollandais des xvie et xviiie siècles d'une collection privée d'Amsterdam*, exh. cat. Rotterdam (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen)/Paris (Institut Néerlandais)/Brussels (Bibliothèque Albert Ier) 1976, no. 119

Paul Eeckhout, *Roelandt Savery, 1576-1639*, exh. cat. Ghent (Museum voor Schone Kunsten) 1954, no. 159

PROVENANCE:

...; from the dealer Nicolaas Beets, Amsterdam, fl. 300, to Iohan Quirijn van Regteren Altena (1899-1980), Amsterdam (L. 4617), on 26 (?) June 1928; by descent to his heirs; sale, I.Q. van Regteren Altena, London (Christie's), 10 July 2014, no. 6, bought in; donated to the museum by the children and grandchildren of the Van Regteren Altena-Van Royen couple, 2024

(inv. no. RP-T-2024-113).



5 JOSUA DE GRAVE (Amsterdam 1643-1712 The Hague)

View of Maastricht from the Northwest, 1671

Pen and brown ink, with grey, blue and red wash, over traces of graphite, on three sheets of paper joined together, 157 x 680 mm

Watermark: Amsterdam Coat of Arms

Signed, lower centre: *J. De Grave*; and dated, upper centre: 1671 9: m / 9: d. [9 September 1671];

inscribed, lower left: numbers 1 to 18, identifying various villages and buildings

Generally, when looking at an image of a panorama or distant view, one can quickly identify the city or place in question. The wide perspective allows one to take in the entire scene at a glance, with landmarks such as (church) towers forming a silhouette that can be easily read. In the case of this recent acquisition, the Sint-Servaasbasiliek, the Sint Janskerk, and the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk shape the skyline and create a striking portrait of the Dutch city Maastricht. To this day, these important architectural beacons adorn the horizon. The majority of city gates depicted, however, have since disappeared, and the surrounding, rolling landscape has largely been developed. Yet the drawing still evokes immediate recognition and a sense of familiarity for anyone who has spent time in the charming city on the river Meuse.

The artist of this impressive sheet, Josua de Grave, lived in Maastricht for several years around 1670. He moved there from Paris in 1668 and married Jenneton de Bisson the following year. It was also very likely in

Maastricht that De Grave met his artistic collaborators, Valentijn (c. 1646-1721) and Barnardus (or Barend) Klotz (?-?), who were either brothers or cousins. Around sixty drawings of Maastricht and its surroundings by this trio are known. *View of the Walls of Maastricht with the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk in the Background* (inv. no. RP-T-1946-63) and *View of Fort Navagne, Eijsden* (inv. no. RP-T-1911-100), for example, were executed by De Grave during his time living in the city. Among the various depictions, this panoramic drawing of the city is by far the most impressive, due to its size (no less than three sheets were used), the extensive legend and the careful application of washes in blue, red and grey tones emphasizing the structures within the city walls.

For whom or with what intent De Grave created this monumental panorama is not known. A few months after its creation, the artist – together with the Klotzes – left Maastricht, likely when tensions leading up to the Siege of Maastricht (1673) had become noticeable. The three artists joined the army of the Dutch States



General under Stadholder Prince William III of Orange-Nassau (1650-1702), in which capacity they briefly revisited Maastricht. Only then did they start producing their more commonly known depictions of military tent camps, fortifications and topographical views that likely served a documentary or strategic purpose. In the case of the present drawing, however, one can assume the panorama was commissioned by a collector, intended as a gift, or made as a memento by and for the artist himself.

MvS

LITERATURE:

- The I.Q. van Regteren Altena Collection*, Part IV: *Dutch & Flemish Drawings from 1500 to 1900*, sale cat. 13 May 2015, no. 181, pp. 112-13
 M.H. Breitbarth-van der Stok, 'Josua de Grave, Valentinus Klotz en Bernardus Klotz', *Bulletin van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Oudheidkundige Bond* 68 (1969), pp. 93-115, esp. p. 98
 R.J.G.M. van Hasselt, 'Drie topografische tekenaars der XVIIe eeuw', *Jaarboek De Ghulden Roos* 25 (1965), pp. 145-92, no. 81
 E.O.M. van Nispen tot Sevenaer, *De monumenten van geschiedenis en kunst in de provincie Limburg* 1 (1953), no. 3, p. 291, afb. 247

PROVENANCE:

....; ? anonymous sale (Van Lapro), Amsterdam (Ploos van Amstel et al.), 19 January 1778, no. 571 (together with nos. 570 and 572), fl. 1.10 (for all three), to Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1726-1798, Amsterdam); his sale, Amsterdam (Ph. van der Schley), 3 March 1800, Album H, no. 30, fl. 5.5, to 'Tiedeman'; ...; collection Iohan Quirijn van Regteren Altena (1899-1980), Amsterdam (L. 4617); by descent to his heirs; sale, I.Q. van Regteren Altena, Amsterdam (Christie's), 13 May 2015, no. 181, bought in; donated to the museum by the children and grandchildren of the Van Regteren Altena-Van Royen couple, 2024
 (inv. no. RP-T-2024-118).



6 FRANZ ANTON MAULBERTSCH (Langenargen 1724-1796 Vienna)

Das Bild der Duldung (Allegory on the Edict of Toleration, 1781): first version, c. 1785

Etching and drypoint, 474 x 495 mm

Having painted frescoes in churches and monasteries throughout the Habsburg Empire, Franz Anton Maulbertsch evolved to become one of the defining painters of the Austrian Rococo. Far less known is the painter's print legacy. Neither hindered by his patrons' wishes nor mindful of commercial success, Maulbertsch afforded himself great freedom in his etchings, both in content and execution. Drawing inspiration from Rembrandt, he experimented extensively with a variety of etching techniques, which resulted in a small oeuvre of stunning prints only known from a few impressions. Maulbertsch likely made these etchings for the sake of experimentation and not for their distribution.

Recently, it was possible to acquire two such extremely rare, monumental etchings: *St Peter Blessing the Apostles* (inv. no. RP-P-2024-593), and the present print, titled *Allegory on the Edict of Toleration*. This complex allegorical representation honours Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II's so-called Edict of Toleration (1781), an order acceding a high level of religious freedom to the Protestant inhabitants of the Habsburg Empire. In a subsequent edict (1782), the emperor likewise bestowed a modest degree of religious freedom on the empire's Jewish inhabitants. Maulbertsch's etching remained unfinished; the only other known surviving impressions are today preserved at the Albertina in Vienna (Sammelband öK/Maulbertsch, fol. 10-12). A second version, which he did complete, is in fact a mirror image of the first – a more finished and balanced work, but also less expressive and experimental. Through the mediation of artist Jakob Matthias Schmutzer, the second version – unlike the first – was published in 1785 by the Viennese art dealer Franz Xaver Stöckl. A lengthy caption identifies the various personifications and likewise facilitates an interpretation of the first version. Further elucidation can also be obtained from a letter written by Schmutzer. Seated in the centre of the etched representation is the female personification of the Truth of the Faith, whose hand rests on the Book of Life. She is flanked on the right by the personification of Law, which bears the burning flame of

Ingenuity, and on the left by representatives of the Protestant denominations. At her feet sits the winged personification of Toleration, playing on a lyre. Suspended above her is the personification of Time, who, aided by a putto hanging from a cord, raises a curtain to reveal the half-naked female personification of Enlightenment, who is accompanied and illuminated by a Genius. In the first version, these figures are indicated only in outline. Far left, a half-naked woman lies sleeping – a representation of classical antiquity. Dancing fauns visible behind her are apparitions in her dream. She is awakened from her sleep by children instructed in the new doctrine. In the background, demonic figures representing Discord and Night appear, signifying the dark days of the Middle Ages. They are driven away by a soldier wearing armour – a representation of Power. In the foreground right, another soldier sits beside a peasant (Obedience) and a peasant woman (Vigilance). Standing behind them is a group of bearded men wearing decorative turbans and other headgear; a Black man is among them. Several of these men are inspired by the etched *tronies* of Rembrandt and Jan Lievens. The caption describes them as representatives of the distant peoples who look with admiration upon the workings and blessings of Toleration. Schmutzer's letter, however, describes the men instead as the personifications of the four religions in the Habsburg Empire: Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism and Islam. Whatever the case may be, noteworthy is that Maulbertsch, in this autonomous work, lauds the emperor for his tolerant policies, which at the time were fiercely opposed by the artist's ecclesiastical patrons. Apparently, this in no way diminished the artist's popularity.

HL

LITERATURE:

- Nicolaas Teeuwisse, *Ausgewählte Werke – Selected Works*, Tefaf 2024, no. 17
 Nicolaas Teeuwisse, *Selected Works*, Berlin 2024, pp. 31-32
 Tomáš Valeš, 'Franz Anton Maulbertsch, Jakob Matthias Schmutzer and the *Allegory on the Edict of Toleration*', *Print Quarterly* 39 (2022), no. 3, pp. 264-73
 Franz Martin Haberditzl, *Franz Anton Maulbertsch 1724-1796*, Vienna 2006, pp. 320-22



Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Painterly Enlightenment: The Art of Franz Anton Maulbertsch, 1724-1796*, Chapel Hill 2005, pp. 67-68, afb. 25

Katharina Setzer, 'Der Graphiker Franz Anton Maulbertsch', in Eduard Hindelang (ed.), *Franz Anton Maulbertsch und sein schwäbischer Umkreis*, Langenargen 1996, pp. 194-208

PROVENANCE:

...; private collection, Stuttgart; Nicolaas Teeuwisse (OHG), Berlin; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the F.G. Waller-Fonds, 2024 (inv. no. RP-P-2024-592).

7 CARL WILHELM KOLBE (Berlin 1757-1835 Dessau)

Cow in the Swamp, c. 1800

Etching on plaster, 298 x 415 mm

The German writer and artist Carl Wilhelm Kolbe was born the son of the gold-embroiderer and tapestry-maker Christian Wilhelm Kolbe (c. 1715-1800) and the French Huguenot Anne Rollet (c. 1716-1782) in Berlin, where he studied at the city's French school. In 1780, Kolbe began working as a French language instructor in Dessau at the then recently founded Philanthropium ('institute of charity'). Barring occasional periods on leave, he would continue teaching French there until 1793, but by as early as 1782, Kolbe had begun to develop an interest in painting and drawing under the influence of the printmaker Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801), a family friend. Upon returning to Berlin in 1793, he chose to pursue an artistic career and to this end he began taking classes with Chodowiecki and others. In 1795, Kolbe was admitted as a full member to the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin. That same year, he settled permanently in Dessau, where he worked at the Hauptschule both as a French teacher and drawing instructor. Kolbe's first portfolio, from 1796, was composed mainly of landscape etchings he made. Four more portfolios followed in the years leading up to 1800. In 1798, Kolbe's success as a printmaker was sealed when appointed court engraver by Prince Leopold Friedrich Franz von Anhalt-Dessau (1740-1817).

Kolbe's renown as a printmaker, already firmly established during his lifetime, was chiefly based on what he himself called *Kräuterblätter*, published in the decades after 1800. These utterly original conceptions invariably feature a lush, growing mass of foliage, depicted from close up and seemingly colossal when combined with human figures or cattle proportioned much smaller than the surrounding vegetation. The resulting compositions evoke a remarkable, surreal atmosphere, as wonderfully demonstrated here in Kolbe's etching *Cow in the Swamp* from circa 1800. In the middle of the representation, a bovine stands with its feet in the water, completely surrounded by dense swamp vegetation. In the foreground far right, one recognizes the gargantuan leaves of the Greater Colt's Foot (*Petasites hybridus*). Behind it, reed stems (*Phragmites communis*) emerge, while in the

middle foreground similar stems lend support to swaying bindweed (*Convolvulus*) growing upwards. Less easy to identify are the large leaves front left, possibly Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*).

The present print is a unique first state: the sky has yet to be rendered with stipples, and the subtle detailing of the cow, the reed in front of it and the caption below are still to be added. What makes this proof particularly special, however, is the way in which the impression was created. Kolbe himself had no access to a printing press. To assess the condition of the etching he was working on, he made a print on plaster. This entailed first inking the copper plate in the regular way. He subsequently added a folded wax or paper border along its perimeter, creating a mould in which he then poured a finely sieved plaster. As the plaster hardened, the moist paste drew the printing ink out of the grooves incised in the etching plate, thus resulting in an even sharper and more intense print than if it had been printed on paper. Kolbe was so pleased with these plaster prints that he began to exhibit them alongside presentations of his regular etchings, where they were highly lauded in the press. Due to the plaster's great fragility, however, only two such works – including the present etching – survive today. Consequently, this proof state documents not only the intermediate steps in Kolbe's etching process, but also the unusual printing technique he applied in creating his *Kräuterblätter*.

EH

LITERATURE:

Agnes Thum, 'Sieh, es kehrt auf Wörlitzens Fluren Arcadia zurück!': *Die Kräuterblätter Carl Wilhelm Kolbes d. Ä.*, Munich (master's thesis Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität) 2005, p. 23

Ulf Martens, *Der Zeichner und Radierer Carl Wilhelm Kolbe d. Ä. (1759-1853)*, Berlin 1976, p. 62-63, 85, no. 89-1(IV)

PROVENANCE:

...; collection of Dr. Ulf Martens, Berlin; Berlin (Galerie Bassenge), 29 May 2024, no. 5230, to the museum with support of the F.G. Waller-Fonds

(inv. no. RP-P-2024-228).



8 KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI (Edo 1760-1849)

The Ghost of Kohada Koheiji, from the series *One Hundred Ghost Stories*, c. 1832

Published by Tsuruya Kiemon (dates unknown), Senkakudō

Colour woodcut, key-block in black with colour blocks, 264 x 187 mm

A grimacing skeleton peers over the edge of a green mosquito net. It is the ghost of the actor Kohada Koheiji, who, shortly after being murdered by his spouse and her lover, returns seeking revenge. Not visible in the print but known to all in Japan at the time is that, under the net pulled down by the spectre with its claw-like hands, his wife and her accomplice lie sleeping.

Combining simplicity and detail, horror and humour, the print shows Hokusai at his best. The apparition's ghostly nature is evident from the flames and wisps of smoke floating up on both sides of the net and along the skull. The detailed rendering of the skull and bones reflects the artist's interest in anatomy. Hokusai is said to have entered an apprenticeship with a bonesetter to gain a better understanding and accurately depict the structure and movement of the human skeleton.

Designed in the same period as Hokusai's famous *Great Wave* (inv. no. RP-P-1956-733) and *Poppies* (inv. no. RP-P-2023-32, acquired by the museum in 2023), the print shares a comparable composition with a movement from right to left. The skeleton appears on the left, creepily encroaching on viewers accustomed to reading words or images from right to left, thus further enhancing the scene's evocation of terror.

The print belongs to a series titled *One Hundred Stories*, better known as *One Hundred Ghost Stories*. In Japan, ghost stories have a long tradition. That of Kohada Koheiji is among the best known: though first recorded in 1803 by the writer Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), an oral version dates back much further. The series title in fact refers to a game whereby people gathered at night to tell each other ghost stories in the presence of lit candles. After each story, a candle was blown out until there was eventually total darkness, with everyone suspended between the fear and hope of experiencing an actual ghostly apparition.

The 'one hundred' in the title actually implies 'many', with the print series undoubtedly conceived to include more than the five designs currently known to exist. This, in combination with the small number of surviving prints of

each design, suggests the series was not very popular with the Japanese public and that the publisher chose to end the print run prematurely. Yet when Japanese prints became known in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, Western collectors took a great liking to Hokusai's ghost prints. New blocks were cut from the original prints and a second edition was published. Already deceased by this time, Hokusai was not personally involved in the reissue.

Thanks to the Goslings NieuwBeerta Fonds, the Rijksmuseum recently acquired a rare print from the original edition. The print represents an aspect of Hokusai's oeuvre less known to the general public and is a highly valuable addition to the collection of Japanese prints.

MJ

LITERATURE:

Andreas Marks, *Japanese Yokai and other Supernatural Beings*, Tokyo 2023, pp. 150-51

Ilana Singer Blaine, 'Things that go Bump in the Night: Ghosts and Demons in Japanese Prints', in Jaron Borensztajn (ed.), *Ghosts and Spirits from the Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art*, Leiden 2012, pp. 82-83

Timothy Clark (ed.), *Hokusai Beyond the Great Wave*, London 2017, pp. 246-47

PROVENANCE:

...; dealer Sebastian Izzard, New York; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Goslings NieuwBeerta Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2025

(inv. no. RP-P-2025-6).



9 WILLEM VAN KONIJNENBURG (The Hague 1868-1943)

Portrait of Peter Spaan, 1915

Black and white chalk on grey paper, 360 x 275 mm

Inscribed, signed and dated, bottom left: *Peter Spaan* / [signature] 1915

Willem Adriaan van Konijnenburg is today remembered as a leading figure of Dutch modern art during the interbellum period. Although he began his career painting in the manner of the Hague School, he eventually developed a rigorously architectonic style rooted in classical ideals and cultivated an ascetic persona to embody his artistic vision. Long neglected after the Second World War, Van Konijnenburg's legacy has seen renewed interest in recent years, largely thanks to Mieke Rijnders's magisterial study of his life and work. This newly acquired portrait study of an identified sitter marks an important addition to the Rijksmuseum's collection of drawings by Van Konijnenburg, which up to now has largely consisted of invented compositions and sketches.

Van Konijnenburg presents the sitter in three-quarter profile at bust length, with a pronounced emphasis on structural coherence. Although individual facial features are defined with clear and confident outlines, restrained shading imbues sculptural solidity to the face as a whole. The artist's treatment of the hair further testifies to his concern for formal unity. After drawing the sitter's right ear in full, Van Konijnenburg extended the hairline laterally to cover the top half, ostensibly rendering the hair as a single continuous form. Repeated contours along the top and back of the head suggest a desire for balance in the overall shape. A general sense of severity is further reinforced by the sitter's overtly downturned gaze – an unusual feature in a portrait.

The sitter is the Dutch composer, poet and critic Peter Spaan (1882-1948), better known for his eccentricity, aesthetic idealism and peripatetic life. At least through the nineteen tens, Spaan was in Van Konijnenburg's social circle and championed the artist in printed publications. Van Konijnenburg in turn immortalized Spaan in a half-length oil portrait from 1917, one of the highlights in the artist's landmark exhibition at Kunstzaal Kleykamp in The Hague that same year. The portrait, now preserved in Kunstmuseum Den Haag (inv. no. 0335057), presents Spaan with a slenderer face, wide open eyes,

and shoulders turned almost entirely to one side. The drawing, made two years prior to the painting, should be understood as an early study or even an independent work, rather than a preparatory drawing directly preceding the oil portrait. The current status of another, larger drawing of Spaan by Van Konijnenburg is unclear (sale Christie's, 5 September 2001, no. 2514, lot. no. 260, pencil on cardboard, 820 x 645 mm, current whereabouts unknown).

A photograph in the archives of the Literatuurmuseum in The Hague (inv. no. s 00762 III 002), recorded to be from 1936 but likely taken earlier judging by his ostensible age, shows Spaan with a downward gaze seen in quarter profile. Although similar in the overall format, differences in the physiognomy and the pose indicate that Van Konijnenburg refined the composition further in the process of drawing, rather than simply copying the photograph.

More significantly, the drawing – and perhaps even the photograph – appears inspired by a portrait of Giuliano de' Medici (1453-1478) by Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), specifically the version now preserved in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (inv. no. 106B). A 1925 description of Van Konijnenburg's studio mentions a reproduction of the Medici portrait hanging on a wall, alongside other reproductions of Italian Renaissance paintings. It is clear that the minimal modelling, severity of form and the sitter's lowered gaze in Van Konijnenburg's drawing were adapted from the Medici portrait. The drawing is therefore a direct testament to the artist's engagement with classical ideals and his efforts to reinterpret them in a modern idiom.

CK

LITERATURE:
Unpublished

PROVENANCE:
J.P. van Konijnenburg-Kempers (widow of the artist); possibly sold or gifted to a private collector, 1963; ...; sale, Brussels (Arenberg), 12 December 2024, to the museum (inv. no. RP-T-2025-10).



IO LAURE ALBIN GUILLOT (Paris 1879-1962)

Microphoto of Unknown Objects, c. 1925-31

Gelatin silver print, 224 x 163 mm

Signed, bottom left, in graphite: *Laure Albin Guillot*

The nineteen twenties saw the publication of three books advocating a new way of seeing, made possible with the camera: László Moholy-Nagy's *Malerei Photographie Film* (1925), Franz Roh and Jan Tschichold's *Foto-Auge* (1929) and Werner Gräff's *Es kommt der neue Fotograf!* (1929). This new generation of artists (born around 1900) wished to break with tired Pictorialism, a movement that from circa 1890 aimed to elevate photography as an art form by creating photos that maximally resembled paintings, drawings and prints. It was time for change, for a more contemporary view of a rapidly modernizing world.

The photographs filling the pages of the above-cited books signal this break with traditional ways of observation and representation. The nature of these images is manifold, with photos taken at very low or very high angles or from extremely close up, capturing movement, and including collages, montages, double printing, abstractions and photograms, as well as images produced by means of a microscope, telescope and X-ray machine. Especially Moholy-Nagy incorporated in his book a whole array of photographs taken for non-artistic purposes, from fields like astronomy, medicine, the military, journalism and advertising. By embracing such highly diverse images, he endeavoured to revitalize the visual idiom of photography. *Malerei Photographie Film* liberated photography from the straitjacket forced upon it by an earlier generation determined to emulate the visual arts in every aspect, ranging from choice of subject matter to the way in which a photo was signed. Its publication opened the door to a new world not just for photographers, but also their clientele and the general public.

The response to the new photography propagated by Moholy-Nagy and his colleagues was immediate. One of the best-known, most exquisite photo books appearing shortly thereafter – a manifestation of the innovation proposed by Moholy-Nagy's book – is *Micrographie décorative*, a book by the French photographer Laure Albin Guillot. Printed and published in 1931 by Draeger Frères in Paris, this work contains twenty microphotographs of various objects. It was by no means obvious that Albin Guillot would join

the ranks of the modernists: her reputation had primarily been built on portraits and nude studies photographed with a soft, romantic blur – a clear reflection of the influence of Pictorialism in her work. Her microphotographs look infinitely more modern than her earlier photos. She seems not to have produced these images solely with an autonomous artistic goal in mind. This is at least suggested by the choice of the word 'décorative' in the title: as Albin Guillot stated in an interview, the book was the result of a collaboration with her husband, a scientific microscopist who died in 1929. Accordingly, Albin Guillot's photographs are a mixture of science, decoration and art.

The beautifully printed and luxuriously executed *Micrographie décorative* was published in a modest edition of 305 copies, partly explaining why it is one of the most sought-after and expensive photo books. Even rarer are the original prints of Albin Guillot's microscopic images, ostensibly unavailable on the art market. Recently, the Rijksmuseum was able to acquire one of these photographs, in this case an image of several unknown objects floating mysteriously in space. Printed on a velvety photographic paper reflecting Albin Guillot's pictorialist roots, it diverges from the new modernist photographic preference for cold, glossy photo paper. The acquisition therefore conveys the insight that the transition from one movement to another is never a clear, sudden break – on the contrary, it typically involves a gradual transition.

HR

LITERATURE:

Unpublished

PROVENANCE:

...; ? sale, Paris (Binoche & Godeau), 31 May 1991, no. 84 (photo and dimensions correspond); ...; private collection, France, 2019; Johannes Faber, Vienna, 2024; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of Baker McKenzie, 2024
(inv. no. RP-F-2024-32).



II ELSA THIEMANN (born Franke, Toruń 1910-1981 Hamburg)

Photograms (designs for wallpaper), 1930-31

Gelatin silver prints, 320 x 225 mm, 229 x 200 mm and 225 x 151 mm

Stamped, verso: NACHLASS ELSA THIEMANN / 1910-1981

Wearing dark-rimmed glasses, a blazer, and her hair in a short bob, Elsa Thiemann was the epitome of the 'new woman', a cultural archetype that emerged in the nineteen twenties. The new woman was modern, self-aware, educated and above all independent. She dressed androgynously, freeing herself from the confines of gender normativity, and continued to work even after marriage. Coming of age in a decade rife with unprecedented possibilities, Thiemann enrolled in the avant-gardist printing and advertising workshop of the Bauhaus in 1929. It was during her second year at the now iconic school of design that she started experimenting with photography.

Three photograms, made during Thiemann's time as a student, were acquired by the Rijksmuseum. Having studied under Josef Albers, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee in her first semester at the Bauhaus, she was one of the first students to enrol in the newly introduced course in photography, from 1929 on taught by Walter Peterhans. To create her distinct patterns, Thiemann placed flowers, plants and other objects directly onto sensitized photographic paper and exposed them without the mediation of a camera. In theory, the resulting abstractions could be endlessly reprinted. These prints were then incorporated in larger collages, some of them coloured, to be produced and commercialized as wallpaper designs by the Rasch firm in Bramsche. Although none of Thiemann's designs were ever realized, they exemplify the irrevocable marriage between art and industry then advocated by the Bauhaus.

In 1931, the year Thiemann received her diploma, it was still uncommon for a woman to graduate from an art school. Until the establishment of the Weimar Republic (and the women's vote) in 1918, women were denied access to most art academies. When the Bauhaus opened its doors in 1919, founding director Walter Gropius propagated the equal attendance of women and men. As such, the school stood at the threshold of women's emancipation in the world of art, architecture and product design. To what degree the Bauhaus was actually an emancipatory institution remains open to debate. Women were

commonly ushered to the school's weavery, even when they cherished other ambitions. Remarkably enough, the photography workshop was the only course with an equal number of male and female students.

Photography was an accessible, affordable, unpretentious and fluid medium that seeped through the cracks of virtually every other (masculine) trade: from architecture to advertising and graphic design. As such, it played a critical part in women's entry into other disciplines of art and design, and consequently, into their (financial) independence. Apart from being an omnipresent means of communication, photography also proved a powerful, playful, experimental and highly personal form of expression. Attesting to this are the various gender nonconforming (self-)portraits made by Thiemann and fellow female *Bauhausler* like Gertrud Arndt, Ré Soupault, Marianne Brandt, Florence Henri and Grete Stern. In the hands of Thiemann and her cohorts, photography became a powerful means of self-realization. Through their commercial work, art and design infiltrated the household and became a part of everyday life.

After graduation, Thiemann worked as a press photographer and created photographic picture puzzles for news journals. When the Nazis rose to power, she took a low-profile job, working as a publisher's editing assistant. Thiemann's labour was the primary source of income both for herself and her husband. A fellow Bauhaus alumnus, Hans Thiemann's surrealist paintings had been declared 'degenerate' by the Nazis. With Hans's appointment as a professor at the Academy of Art in Hamburg in 1960, Thiemann stopped photographing altogether. After her death in 1981, what little remained of her work came into the possession of her friend Margot Schmidt, who gifted part of the estate to the Bauhaus Archive Berlin and the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation. More than a century after their creation, Thiemann's design experiments are being rediscovered as exceptional testimonies to the now-famous Bauhaus credo: that art and daily life are inextricably linked.

HH



RP-F-2023-47-1

LITERATURE:

Annemarie Jaeggi and Margot Schmidt (eds.), *Elsa Thiemann: Fotografien Bauhaus und Berlin*, exh. cat. Berlin (Bauhaus-Archiv/Berlinischen Galerie) 2004
Christine Macel and Karolina Lewandowska (eds.), *Women in Abstraction*, London/New York 2021

PROVENANCE:

...; Galerie Bassenge, Berlin; from which purchased by the museum, 2023
(inv. nos. RP-F-2023-47-1 to -3).



RP-F-2023-47-2



RP-F-2023-47-3

12 SHEILA PINKEL (Newport News (VA) 1941)

Folded Paper, 1974-75

Gelatin silver print, 438 x 551 mm

Signed, on the reverse, in pencil: *Pinkel*; inscribed (later, in a different hand): *FP 31*

Sheila Pinkel studied photography at UCLA with Robert Heineken, an artist whose experimental mindset inspired her to explore the possibilities of light and photography. In 1977, Pinkel earned her master's degree in Fine Arts, without ever having used a camera. This is less strange than it might sound, given the frequent experimentation with photography practiced in artists' circles in the nineteen seventies. It was not long before that photography was discovered as an art medium offering an abundance of new possibilities. In Pinkel's case this resulted in a series of photographs: photographic images created without a camera by placing objects on the photographic paper. Pinkel's experimentation with light was also encouraged by Don Villarejo, a physics professor tutoring in light phenomena for one semester at UCLA. Working with light and photographic paper, Pinkel began creating her series *Folded Paper* in 1974. The Rijksmuseum now has two works from this series in its collection, one recently purchased (inv. no. RP-F-2024-188) and a second donated as a gift.

The two *Folded Papers* in the collection of the Rijksmuseum are exceptional in their elegant beauty and simplicity. In the darkroom, Pinkel took a sheet of photographic paper and folded it double twice; she then wadded the paper before unfolding it again. The result was a three-dimensional object in relief, onto which she then cast light from a single point, using a lamp placed at such a low level that it emitted nothing more than raking light. The exposure time was short: Pinkel turned the light off as quickly as she was able.

The lower the lamp was placed, the greater the shadows produced by the paper relief. The final image is formed by the contrast of light and dark. In the two *Folded Papers* acquired by the Rijksmuseum, one can clearly discern the difference between the shadow cast by a sharp fold in the paper, where the transition from light to dark is far more abrupt, versus when the fold in the paper shows only a curvature. As Pinkel recently recounted in an e-mail to the author of this piece: 'As I kept working I better understood how my handling of the paper resulted in images.

I had been a sculptor and so had experience with 3-dimensional materials. While I couldn't control every aspect of the image-making process, I could anticipate the outcome. So, I thought of the process as a collaboration between myself, light and the paper.'

For her *Folded Papers*, Pinkel chose a photographic paper thick enough to create the desired relief. Unlike many other paper types, the specific paper she used, of the German brand Luminos, had no baryta layer between the light-sensitive emulsion and the paper. Due to its stiffness, this layer would possibly be prone to cracking during the physical folding of the paper and therefore result in a different relief.

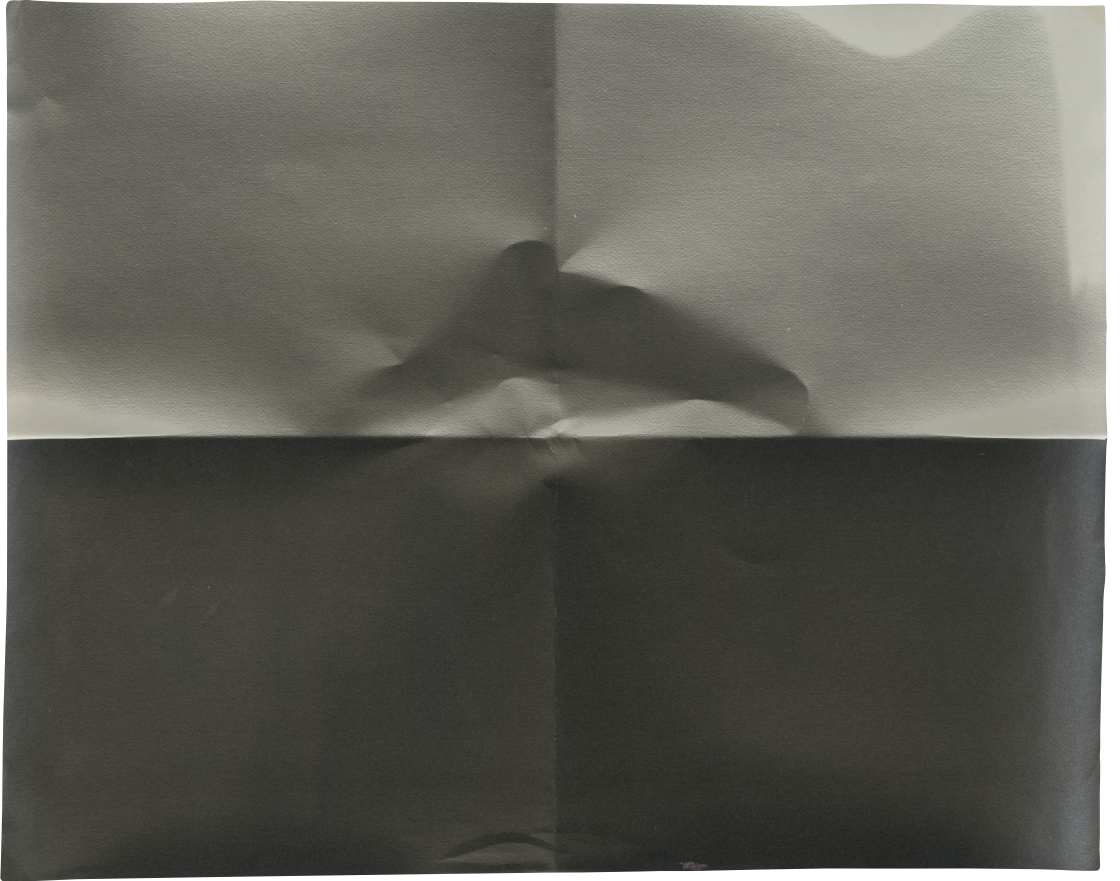
Besides the relief in the paper that Pinkel created herself by folding and wadding, another shape can be discerned in both works, identical in form but recurring in different places. When asked, Pinkel explained these identical shapes as damage (indentations) sustained prior to her using the paper. Pinkel purchased the Luminos paper in rolls, from which she cut the desired format by hand. Because the paper came in rolls, that single indentation could appear in more than one place.

Pinkel recalls making hundreds of these 'folded papers' in various sizes; of these, she kept approximately fifty. Those now in the Rijksmuseum collection were made in the smallest format, which she used in the years 1974 to 1977. More precisely, she surmises, they were made in 1974 or 1975.

HR

LITERATURE:
Unpublished

PROVENANCE:
...; Higher Pictures Generation, 2024; from which to Jan and Trish de Bont who donated it to the museum, 2024
(inv. no. RP-F-2024-189).



13 JENNIFER TEE (Arnhem 1973)

Tulip Palepai, Navigating the River of the World, 2017

Collage of dried tulip petals on paper, diptych, 3600 x 9000 mm per work

Using tens of thousands of dried tulip petals, Jennifer Tee creates collages inspired by Palepai, traditional 'ship cloths' from South Sumatra. These are the artist's best-known works, though she is also internationally admired for her sculptures, textile works, installations and performances. The starting point for the Palepai works occurred in 2012, at which time Tee was commissioned to create an art mural based on the theme 'connection to the world' for the metro station of Amsterdam Central Station. Tee often works with materials linked to a place's identity. Her choice of tulips was inspired by the associations the flower evokes: from iconic, colourful bulb fields to the history of migration and trade. After conducting lengthy research at the historical flower bulb garden *Hortus Bulborum*, Tee selected a variety of suitable tulip species, among them the rare Rembrandt Tulip (Viceroy). It was precisely this flower with its spectacular flamed pattern, brought on by a virus, that had unleashed the tulip mania in the seventeenth century. Tee's preferred choice of materials makes her dependent on nature: each year, she has only a few weeks to pick and dry the thousands of petals she requires.

In terms of content, *Tulip Palepai* aligns with what Tee calls 'the soul in limbo', a central concept in her practice. The design depicts two ships representing the journey of souls on their way to the afterlife. The ships' masts transition into a tree of life. Tee borrowed both the design and the motifs for her collage from the aforementioned Palepai: handwoven cloths bearing ship motifs produced in the fishing villages of South Sumatra. There the cloths are used as a ceremonial background during rites of passage. In *Tulip Palepai*, the ship motif – like the tulip – is deeply connected to various aspects of Dutch history, such as trade, migration, colonialism and transition. The people, animals and plants partly refer to the visual programme of the Central Station. In the ships' bows, one recognizes the semi-circular ground plan of the Amsterdam Canal Belt. Yet *Tulip Palepai* also touches on the artist's personal family history: 'Both tulips and ship cloths personally mean a lot to me. It was a ship that brought my father from Indonesia to the Netherlands in

1950, together with his parents and sister. Every year, my maternal grandfather sailed to America by ship, for his company that traded in tulip bulbs.'

Due to its great fragility, the collage itself cannot be displayed in the metro station. Since 2018, a reproduction of *Tulip Palepai* is viewed day in, day out by tens of thousands of travellers. At the onset of 2017, the original collage was exhibited in the atrium of the Rijksmuseum, to which it was subsequently donated by the artist in 2024. Since the creation of *Tulip Palepai*, Tee has continued producing new collages on a seasonal basis. Works from the series are held in the collections of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Centraal Museum, the Amsterdam University Medical Center, the FRAC Alsace cultural centre, and as well in American private collections.

MC

LITERATURE:

Ian Tee, 'Spiritual Journeys with Jennifer Tee: On Voyages, Deep Time and the Soul in Limbo', *Check-In* 2023, pp. 139-47, see <https://artandmarket.net/dialogues/2023/7/13/spiritual-journeys-with-jennifertee>

Merel van Tilburg, 'Still Shifting, Mother Field', *De Witte Raaf* 222 (2023)

Jennifer Tee, *Tampan Tulip*, exh. cat. Vienna (Wiener Secession)/Rotterdam (Kunstinstituut Melly) 2022

Anonymous, 'Jennifer Tee "Still Shifting, Mother Field" at Secession, Vienna', *Mouse Magazine* (2022)

Sophie Williamson, 'How You Function as an Artist between Two Poles', *Metropolis M* 6 (2020)

PROVENANCE:

Donated to the museum by the artist, 2024

(inv. nos. RP-T-2024-260, -261).



detail RP-T-2024-260



RP-T-2024-260





RP-T-2024-261



14 CARRIE MAE WEEMS (Portland (OR) 1953)

Painting the Town #04, 2021

Inkjet print on cotton rag paper, 1473 x 2209 mm (image), 1500 x 2238 mm (frame)

At first glance, Carrie Mae Weems's photograph *Painting the Town #04* resembles an abstract painting. Broad brushstrokes and a black square stretch two metres wide across a monumental print. But the image is less abstract than it appears. It is only at a second look that a numerical stamp, a few nails, and the distinct wood grain pull us back into the realm of realism. The ever-so-slight hint of perspective in the seemingly flat surface betrays the fact that we are actually looking at a boarded-up window or doorway. The story behind the making of the image further reveals its historic significance.

The boarded-up storefront was photographed in the streets of Portland, Oregon, in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter protests around the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minnesota on 25 May 2020. Weems's home city of Portland became the epicentre of a global movement. Clashes between demonstrators, authorities and Trump supporters were particularly violent here, with daily marches lasting for months on end. Activists wrote their slogans on wooden panels installed as a precautionary measure; these texts were subsequently painted over by the authorities. Weems became fascinated with the painterly compositions that were the unintended consequence of this act of censorship.

The Rijksmuseum has acquired two works from the resulting series *Painting the Town* (2021), that consists of forty-two photographs. The title is a cynical reference to the English phrase 'to paint the town', meaning to go on a bender (dancing, drinking, having fun). The frivolity of the title and the beauty of the photographs are misleading. They present a painful commentary on the precarious state of freedom of expression in the United States and elsewhere. Monumental and poetic as they may be, these works show us an ugly slice of history as it unfolds before our eyes. Who is granted permission to speak, and who is rendered invisible, even erased?

With her series, Weems explores what it means to be both a witness to history and a participant in it. Her own experience as a Black female artist threads throughout her entire oeuvre. With colour fields resembling those in the work of abstract expressionists, *Painting the Town* subtly questions the exclusion of Black female artists from the canon of abstract painting. Weems's artistic practice aims to address such systemic racism.



Her activism is perhaps most explicit in her photographic billboards made in support of Kamala Harris's 2024 electoral campaign. One billboard shows the artist herself, with the white columns of the Lincoln Memorial towering over her tiny silhouette, accompanied by the sentence: 'With democracy in the balance, there is only one choice.'

HH



LITERATURE:

Elvira Dyangani Ose, Louise Wolthers and Dragana Vujanović Östlind (eds.), *Carrie Mae Weems: Hasselblad Award 2023*, Hasselblad Foundation, Cologne 2023
 Carrie Mae Weems, *Reflections for now* (Raúl Muñoz de la Vega, Florence Ostende and Maja Wismer (eds.)), exh. cat. London (Barbican Art Gallery)/Basel (Kunstmuseum) 2023

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin; from which purchased, together with *Painting the Town* #03, by the museum with the support of the Friends Lottery and the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2025
 (inv. no. RP-F-2025-13).