



# Acquisitions

## The Print Room\*

• HUIGEN LEEFLANG •

### Early Coloured Woodcuts from a Swiss Private Collection

The heirs of a Swiss collector recently gave a number of print rooms, including the Rijksmuseum's, first refusal in the acquisition of his outstanding collection of early woodcuts. The most expensive items were already well represented in the Rijksprentenkabinet or were beyond reach financially, like a set of sublime impressions of the Apocalypse by Albrecht Dürer (acquired by the National Gallery in Washington).

After careful consultation with the Rijksmuseum and with support from various funds, the print room of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, which specializes in drawings and prints from the German Renaissance, bought two exceptional sets of woodcuts of mercenaries and Turks (Peter van der Coelen, *Mercenaries and Turks. A Recovered Treasure from the German Renaissance*, Rotterdam 2009). The Rijksmuseum chose five rare coloured woodcuts.

Since printmaking was discovered around 1420, hand-colouring prints continued to be a common practice until well into the nineteenth century. However quite early on this colouring was criticized as an intervention that damaged the graphic quality of prints, particularly where works by the great printmakers were concerned (S. Dackerman et al., *Painted Prints. The Revelation of Color in North Renaissance & Baroque Engravings, Etchings & Woodcuts*, exh. cat. Baltimore (The Baltimore Museum of Art)/Saint Louis (Saint Louis Museum of Art) 2003). As early as 1528, for example, Erasmus was condemning the colouring of Albrecht Dürer's distinguished prints (see no. 4). Willem Goeree's treatise on art (1697) contains the terse verdict 'Printen beverven is printen bederven' ('To colour prints is to spoil prints'). It is a view that has been

endorsed by enthusiasts and collectors for a long time, so until recently relatively few examples of coloured prints were to be found in the Rijksprentenkabinet, apart from in its collections of topographical and popular prints and in its modest holdings of early woodcuts. To do justice to the widespread historical phenomenon of the hand-coloured print, it has for some years been the Rijksprentenkabinet's policy to focus on acquiring exceptional examples of this phenomenon. The purchase from the estate of the Swiss collector is in line with this ambition.

Purchasing early prints is also among the special objectives of the fund created by François Gérard Waller which has been financing the most important purchases of prints for the Rijksprentenkabinet since 1937. The scarce supply in the art market means that acquiring early prints is an objective that can only be achieved very occasionally. The purchase of the five sheets means that a number of manifestations in early printmaking that have thus far been entirely lacking have now been added to the collection. This applies especially to the extraordinarily fine coloured sheet from a block book, two late medieval and – as far as we know – unique woodcuts of the Virgin, and a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer with contemporary colouring and heightened with gold, presented here.

## I ANONYMOUS (Germany)

*The Four Angels at the Corners of the Earth and the Hymn of the Beatification*  
(sheet from a block book of the *Apocalypse*), c. 1460-67

Woodcut, coloured with a brush and pink, green, orange, grey and black ink, 268 x 198 mm

Mounted on an old album sheet

Watermark: Ox head

This exceptionally fine and beautifully coloured sheet came from a block book of the Revelation of St John. Block books are an early form of printing in which both the text and the illustrations were cut into the same wooden block. The sheets were only printed on one side because the ink came through. Afterwards they were usually coloured by hand. It has long been thought that this technique was the forerunner of book printing with separate letters as developed by Johannes Gutenberg for the first time around 1450. Block books are thought to have been first created around 1420. Their invention has been credited to Haarlem-born Laurens Coster. The block book, however, proves to have developed at almost the same time as book printing with separate letters. It is in fact an alternative technique in which word and image can be integrated in a straightforward way. This combination of text and image has provided a number of absolute high points in book production. Nevertheless the block book as a phenomenon was short-lived and the technique died out after only a few decades. The exceptionally fine example of a block book sheet that has been acquired came from the fourth edition of the *Apocalypse*, produced in Germany between 1460 and 1467. The complete edition comprises 48 sheets, most of which contain various illustrations of the Revelation of St John, divided between a top and a bottom zone. The texts, mainly from the Vulgate Bible, are reproduced on banners which are placed like text balloons beside the figures or held up by them so that St John and the angels are shown speaking. Similarities to the modern strip cartoon become even more apparent in the sequence of different scenes on a page and the clear, effective way the story is summarized in word and image. The *Apocalypse* tells how St John went to Patmos, describes the visions he had there about the end time and the breaking of the seven seals. When the first seals are broken the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse appear – Pestilence, War, Famine and Death. On the opening of the sixth seal the earth is wracked by enormous earthquakes; the sun darkens, the moon turns blood

red and the stars fall from the heavens, which curl up like a scroll. The sheet in question shows the short-lived peace before the opening of the seventh seal and total destruction. In the top zone St John stands on the left and on the right there is a large angel who orders the other angels to leave the earth and the land in peace. The ship and the two trees in the mandorla (the almond-shaped surround) represent the sea and the earth respectively. Around the mandorla, four smaller angels grasp the heads of the four destroying winds to silence them. In the bottom zone St John is once again shown on the left with one of the firstborn of Israel. On the right in a mandorla there is God the Father with the lamb on a throne surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists. The angels, the just and members of the tribe of Israel with palm branches in their hands are gathered around the throne. The sheet is very carefully and subtly coloured – note, for example, the way in which drapery is suggested with grey and black brushstrokes. The same colour combinations of pale pink, green, green ochre and minium-coloured orange are found in the intact copies of this block book in Mainz and in Modena – the renowned latter copy coming from the D'Este Collection. The colouring was executed in the same workshop, but in view of the differences in details and the use of colour, probably not by the same hand.

## LITERATURE:

- W.L. Schreiber, *Handbuch der Holz- und Metallschritte des xv. Jahrhunderts*, 8 vols., Leipzig 1926-30, vol. 4, p. 177, 9-IX  
C. Angelini et al., *Apokalypse. Eine Holzschnittfolge der Sammlung Este*, Parma-Geneva 1974  
E. Purpus and C. Scheider, 'Die Szenenabfolge der Blockbuch-Apokalypse', and H.A. Halbey, 'Die Mainzer Blockbuch-Ausgabe "Apokalypse"', in S. Mertens et al., *Blockbücher des Mittelalters. Bilderfolge als Lektüre*, exh. cat. Mainz (Gutenberg-Museum) 1991, pp. 59-74, 75-97 and 209, no. 62

## PROVENANCE:

- Private collection Switzerland; purchased with the aid of the F.G. Waller Fonds, 2009  
(inv. no. RP-P-2009-24).





## 2 ANONYMOUS (Augsburg/Upper Rhine-Lake Constance region)

*Virgin and Child and Six Female Saints in an Enclosed Courtyard (Virgo inter virgines),*

c. 1440-60

Woodcut, coloured with brush and red, blue, green, brown and yellow ink, heightened with silver (oxidized); margins decorated with floral motifs, 105 x 133 mm (impression of woodcut), 147 x 139 mm (sheet dimensions)

This woodcut, which as far as we know is unique, depicts the Virgin and the Christ Child in an enclosed courtyard, flanked by six female saints. To the right of the Madonna sits St Catherine who holds the child's hand as a sign of her mystic marriage to Christ. On the right we can also see St Agnes and St Ursula and on the left (from right to left) St Barbara, St Margaret and St Dorothy. The saints are identifiable from their traditional attributes. The woodcut was probably not printed on a press. It seems more likely that the paper was rubbed on to the woodblock by hand. The iron gall ink used has discoloured to a light brown, a characteristic phenomenon in early woodcuts. The markedly contrasting, bright colours were skilfully applied with a brush. The unprinted margins top and bottom are decorated with floral motifs. The entire work looks like an exceptionally fine late-medieval work of art, designed for contemplation or to assist prayer. The effect must originally have been even more luminous because of the silver on the Madonna's crown, the halos around the heads of the saints and the Christ Child and St Catherine's sword. However the precious metal has oxidized to grey. The ground of red bole – an earth over which the silver was applied – shows through here and there. This way of heightening with silver and the colouring, for example the blue of the Virgin's robe, the green of the vegetation and the orange framing are characteristic of woodcuts from Augsburg and the surrounding area (see also the next number). The composition, the style of the figures and the way their delicate faces were cut with high, arched eyebrows and slanting eyes, likewise point to an origin in this region. Aside from this unique impression the scene is also known in a rather crude copy in the Couvent d'Unterlinden in Colmar (P. Schmidt, 'L'usage de la gravure aux xve et xvie siècles au couvent d'Unterlinden', *Les dominicaines d'Unterlinden*, 2 vols., exh. cat. Colmar (Musée d'Unterlinden) 2000-01, vol. 1, pp. 226-47, pp. 240-41, fig. 7). Our original, however,

compares well with other woodcuts of the Virgin and Child surrounded by female saints from the Upper Rhine-Bodensee region (Schreiber 1150, 1160, 1161, 1168, 1170; R.S. Field, *Fifteenth Century Woodcuts and Metalcuts from the National Gallery of Art Washington D.C.*, Washington s.a., no. 175; J. Vander Stock, *Early Prints. The Print Collection of the Royal Library of Belgium*, London/Turnhout 2002, p. 44, no. 085; J. Černý, 'Fifteenth Century Single-Page Prints from Olomouc', *Ars linearis* 2 (2010), pp. 12-21, 89-95, esp. p. 14, fig. 2, p. 91). The painting of the Virgin and six female saints in an enclosed courtyard by the early Dutch Master of the *Virgo inter Virgines* in the Rijksmuseum is also iconographically comparable (inv. no. SK-A-501).

## LITERATURE:

A. Laube, *Meister-Graphik 50 Jahre Buch- und Kunstantiquariat*, Zürich 1972, no. 1

## PROVENANCE:

Private collection Switzerland; purchased with the aid of the F.G. Waller Fonds, 2009

(inv. no. RP-P-2009-21).



## 3 ANONYMOUS (Upper Rhine-Lake Constance region/Augsburg/Ulm)

*Mary as the Mother of Sorrows/ Mater Dolorosa,*

c. 1470-80

Woodcut, coloured in red, yellow, blue, pink and green ink, heightened with silver (oxidized),  
139 x 97 mm

The woodcut, never previously described and probably unique, shows the Virgin as the Mother of Sorrows. She sits in adoration at the cross, beside an open grave, and is tormented by seven swords, symbolizing the seven sorrows she had to endure as Christ's mother. The scene is framed by a crown of thorns. On the crown of thorns there are five escutcheons on which parts of Christ's body are depicted: the pierced hands and feet and the tortured heart above. The presentation of a printed devotional image with a portrayal of Mary and/or Christ in a frame in the shape of a crown of thorns is not particularly uncommon (Schreiber 913, 913a and 1013-1). The colouring of the sheet is very similar to that of the previous woodcut (no. 2), in which the same sort of blue, red, yellow, green and brown has been used. The heightening of this sheet with silver on a ground of red bole is also comparable. The silver halo around the Virgin's head and the seven swords have similarly oxidized to grey. The style of the figure, the cutting manner and the colouring point to the Upper Rhine-Lake Constance region. The figure of Mary, for example, is very like that in a print of almost the same size with the Virgin as a half-length figure in the clouds, an example of which is in the Rijksprentenkabinet. This woodcut was once attributed to the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, but its point of origin has now been identified as Augsburg or Ulm around 1470-80 (inv. no. RP-P-1922-247; Schreiber 998; M. Geisberg, 'Dresden Kupferstichkabinett', in P. Heitz (ed.), *Einblattdrucke des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 100 vols., Strasbourg 1899-1942, vol. 22, no. 5).

## LITERATURE:

Not described

## PROVENANCE:

Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection (l. 2715a); private collection Switzerland; purchased with the aid of the F.G. Waller Fonds, 2009  
(inv. no. RP-P-2009-23).







## 4 ALBRECHT DÜRER (Nuremberg 1471-1528 Nuremberg)

*Allegory on the Council of the City of Nuremberg*, frontispiece from *Reformacion der Stat Nüremberg*, published by Friedrich Peypus, Nuremberg 1522

Woodcut, coloured with brush in red, two shades of green, various shades of dark and light blue, heightened with gold paint, 246 x 170 mm

Top centre in cartouche: *SANCTA IVSTITIA* | 1521

Recto in letterpress: *Reformacion der Stat Nüremberg* | *Cum Gratia et Privilegio*

This woodcut, designed by Albrecht Dürer, was the frontispiece for the new civil code of the city of Nuremberg published in 1522. The word 'Reformacion' in the title refers to legal reforms, not reforms in the religious sense. Dürer based the design of the print on the frontispiece of the older Nuremberg civil code, which he transformed into an impressive allegorical glorification of the council in his birthplace. In the lower register two male angels hold three shields with the arms of Nuremberg and the imperial arms. Above, seated on a cloud, two female angels hold attributes that allude to virtues associated with good city government, a sword and scales (Justice), a burning heart (Charity) and an upturned purse (Generosity). Dürer probably finished the design for the woodcut just before his trip to the Netherlands in 1521. A bill dated 2 April 1522 refers to a payment of seven guilders to the woodcutter and a hundred guilders for a hundred copies of the book for Nuremberg city council. Several coloured impressions of the frontispiece were supplied, both in copies of the book and removed from it – this is what happened to this sheet (cf. S. Dackerman et al., *Painted Prints. The Revelation of Color in North Renaissance & Baroque Engravings, Etchings & Woodcuts*, exh. cat. Baltimore (The Baltimore Museum of Art)/Saint Louis (Saint Louis Museum of Art) 2003, no. 20). A comparison of several examples reveals great differences in the quality of the colouring, ranging from rather simple to very lavish and sophisticated. The sheet described here comes into the latter category. The quality of the colouring can be compared with that of the woodcut in Willibald Pirckheimer's own copy of the *Reformacion der Stat Nüremberg* in the British Museum. The humanist Pirckheimer was an important administrator in Nuremberg and a personal friend of Dürer's. The colouring of the woodcut in his copy of the *Reformacion* is of such high quality that it has been suggested that it was done by Dürer himself (D. Paisy,

'Two new Dürers in London?', *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* 2003, pp. 31-44, figs. 4-9). In the recent oeuvre catalogue of Dürer's woodcuts doubt has been cast on this and the colouring has been accredited to a professional colourist from Nuremberg (R. Schoch et al., *Albrecht Dürer. Das druckgraphische Werk*, 3 vols., Munich/London/New York 2001-04, vol. 2, no. 273). However, it is a fact that colouring of the quality of that of the copies in London and Amsterdam is seldom if ever found anywhere else. The painting of this woodcut is at least as fine and subtle as that of Pirckheimer's book in London, among other things because of the additions of gold highlights in the clothes of the two angels below and the use of different shades of blue and green. The original woodblock is now in Berlin (Derschau Collection). In 1821, three hundred years after the block was made, impressions were made from it and coloured in a quasi-sixteenth-century way. This indicates a burgeoning interest in the phenomenon of old coloured prints (R.Z. Beck, *Hans Sachs in Gewande seiner Zeit*, Gotha 1821, title page). The colouring of the nineteenth-century imitations is easy to distinguish, however, as their quality is far removed from that of sixteenth-century examples and certainly from the magnificent display of colour in the example illustrated here.

## LITERATURE:

Meder 285; Schoch et al. 273 I

## PROVENANCE:

Private collection Switzerland; purchased with the aid of the F.G. Waller Fonds, 2009  
(inv. no. RP-P-2009-25).







## Prints from the Golden Age from the Harry van Hugten Collection

**F**or a long time Harry van Hugten has been a facilitator in the world of prints. Through his practice as a dentist he developed a convenient method of taking x-ray photographs of watermarks in collections of art on paper. Together with Erik Hinterding, he took pictures of watermarks in Rembrandt etchings in collections all over Europe.

These photographs formed the basis for the research for Hinterding's doctorate from the University of Utrecht (*Rembrandt as an Etcher. The Practice of Production and Distribution* (dissertation University of Utrecht), 3 vols., Ouderkerk aan den IJssel 2006). As a collector, Van Hugten initially concentrated on prints from the Golden Age, particularly landscapes. He built up an exquisite collection of landscapes from the late sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth (no. 6). Later he extended his field of interest to genre scenes (nos. 5, 7). Van Hugten is also an enthusiastic collector of modern prints. His taste is quite eclectic, and he acquires both figurative and abstract work by established artists and beginners. His collection of prints by the Post-Expressionist Aad de Haas (1920-1972) is particularly interesting. For some time De Haas lived in Gulpen, the village in Limburg where Van Hugten grew up and where he got to know De Haas as a child. He combines the collection of his graphic work with extensive research into this intriguing artist. Over the years Van Hugten has donated many works by Aad de Haas to the Rijksmuseum. In 2008 personal circumstances led him to part with a large part of his collection of old prints. More than eighty sheets found their way to the Rijksmuseum, some as purchases,

some as gifts. They are a superb supplement to its collections of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlandish prints. The Rijksprentenkabinet has one of the finest collections in this field and the fact that gaps could be filled thanks to Van Hugten testifies to the quality of his collection. Some of the additions were sheets that were missing from the Amsterdam print room altogether; in other cases, though, the Rijksmuseum already had an impression of a print but Van Hugten owned a considerably better one. He has since begun to concentrate on new areas of collecting. In the years to come he wants to support the Rijksprentenkabinet in acquiring contemporary prints, in particular the colour woodcuts by Siemen Dijkstra.



## 5 PIETER DE JODE THE ELDER

(Antwerp 1572/73-1634 Antwerp)

after

ADAM VAN NOORT

(Antwerp 1562-1641 Antwerp)

*Loving Couple in the Open Air and Music-**Making Company in an Interior at Night,*

c. 1595

Engravings, 162 x 196 mm

Signed at the bottom and with the publisher's

address: *P. de Iode sculp. | A. va[n] Oort fig. and**Formis heredu Gerardi de Iode | Petrus de Iode**sculpsit | Adam van Oort figur* respectively

Numbered in pen: 29 and 28 respectively

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, thanks in part to Pieter Breughel, peasant scenes started to become a popular theme in Antwerp printmaking. Genre compositions with figures from higher social classes, however, did not come into vogue until the end of the century. The two scenes featuring lavishly dressed young people, designed by the Antwerp painter Adam van Noort and engraved by his fellow townsman Pieter de Jode the Elder, are early examples of this trend. The engravings are extremely rare. When the works were shown in the major exhibition of genre prints in the Rijksmuseum, impressions had to be borrowed from Vienna (E. de Jongh and G. Luijten, *Spiegel van alledag. Nederlandse genreprenten 1550-1700*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), Amsterdam/Ghent 1997, pp. 75-79, no. 8). It has been suggested that the two engravings are part of a set of the five senses and depict hearing and touch. If this is the case they could be two of the earliest genre depictions of the senses. It is more likely, however, that the two prints are a pair. Both show the entertainments of extravagantly dressed, elegant young people. One depicts a young couple reclining on the ground in a park-like setting. The man makes advances that the woman appears to ward off half-heartedly. Beside them there is a covered table with a dish of fruit and a jug of wine on it. In the background a second couple walks arm in arm in the landscape. The other print shows an evening gathering of a group of young people around a virginal. A woman plays the keyboard instrument and a man plays a lute while a little boy holds a song book. He is undoubtedly the singer, and is being





*Pierre de Tode sculpteur*

*Adam van Oort fecit.*

accompanied by the two musicians. There are two listeners, one of whom holds a torch that illuminates the company. The effect of the illuminated clothing and faces in the dark room was skilfully exploited by the engraver Pieter de Jode – one of Hendrick Goltzius's pupils. This nocturne is also a magnificent contrast to the blond print with the couples in the garden, who appear to be bathed in bright sunlight. This contrast also provides a good explanation for the presentation of the pendants. They are images of day and night packaged in entertaining, elegant scenes. Perhaps the inscriptions in the margins below the scenes would have clarified the question of the content. However we know of no impressions in which the empty margins have been filled with text. There are, though, copies attributed to the Haarlem artist Gillis van Breen, in which the scenes have been given moralizing captions. In the case of the courting couple there is a warning against alcohol abuse and the resulting illicit sexual acts. In the text to the music-making company there is reference to frivolous pastimes and mortality. We do not know whether Adam van Noort and Pieter de Jode had a warning like this in mind when they made the original prints. Even prints that were not originally intended as admonitions seem to have acquired the moralization that was an inevitable element of almost every sixteenth-century print caption. In this case perhaps there was a deliberate decision to refrain from moralizing and so the margins for the text were left empty. The engravings came from an old print album – judging by the dimensions of the sheets and the numbering in pen – and are in perfect condition.

## LITERATURE:

G.K. Nagler, *Neues allgemeines Künstler-Lexicon oder Nachrichten von dem Leben und den Werken der Maler, Bildhauer, Kupferstecher, Formschneider, Lithographen*, 22 vols., Munich 1832-52, vol. 10, p. 263 (only the *Music-Making Company*)  
 F. Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen. Beschrijving van Nederlandsche historieplaten, zinneprenten en historische kaarten*, 4 vols., Amsterdam 1863-82, no. 1118R

## PROVENANCE:

Sale Galerie Gerda Bassenge, Berlin, 30 November 2006, no. 5106a; gift of H.H.M. van Hugten, Hilversum, 2009 (inv. nos. RP-P-2009-215 and RP-P-2009-216).









## 6 ESAIAS VAN DE VELDE (Amsterdam 1590/91-1630 The Hague)

*Landscape with Waterfall, Bridge and Rotunda*, c. 1614-16

Etching, state 1(2), 101 mm x 135 mm

Signed top left: *E.VANDEN.VELDE*

Watermark: Bottom of coat of arms (cf. Heawood 546)

Esaias van de Velde was one of the first artists to make prints of the Dutch landscape. In a group of etchings that must have been made around 1614-16 he depicted identifiable landscapes, usually based on drawings made on the spot. Though less frequently than his nephew Jan van de Velde the Younger, Esaias also ventured to make some imaginary views with southern motifs. In this small, delicate etching he combined Italianate buildings, a rocky stream and a waterfall with a flat landscape on the left. As far as we know, neither Esaias nor Jan van der Velde ever went to Italy and they generally borrowed the motifs for their Italianate works from prints. Paul Brill's Roman landscape etchings of 1590-1600 were among their most important examples. They not only derived their Italian motifs from them, but also the fluid parallel lines Esaias used for the hilly terrain, the buildings and the water, which are strongly reminiscent of the flowing hand we see in Brill's etchings. Swift lines placed close together suggest fast-flowing water. The white-crested waves are created with stipples and hatching. The clouds are rendered in fine, sensitive lines. The effective use of the white of the paper has created a superb effect of depth in the small print.

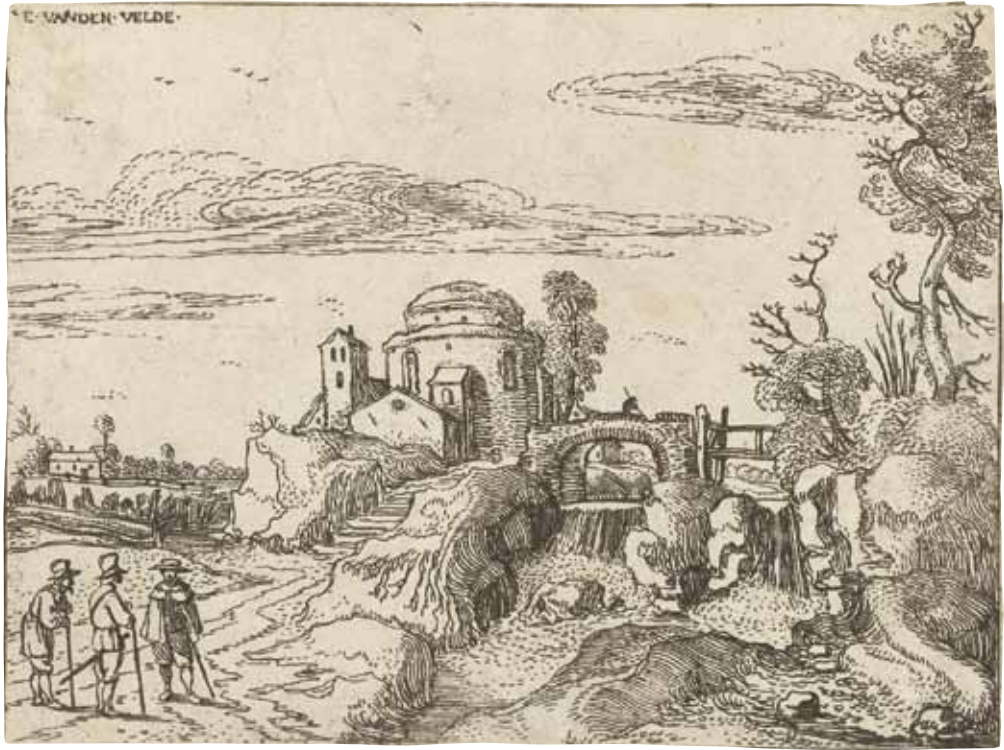
Good impressions of etchings by Esaias van de Velde are rare. The print room already had an impression of this print in the second state, which has the number 11 on the right of the composition. Until now we only knew of one impression of the first state, without a number (Kupferstichkabinett, Braunschweig). The print from the Van Hugten Collection is the second. This impression is richer in contrast, more subtle and sharper than the impression of the second state already in the Rijksprentenkabinet. The artist may have printed it himself, unlike the numbered impressions, which were printed by a publisher – probably Claes Jansz Visscher.

## LITERATURE:

- F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca. 1450-1700*, 72 vols., Amsterdam/Roosendaal/Rotterdam/Ouderkerk aan den IJssel 1949-2010, vol. 32, p. 253, no.15  
 C.S. Ackley, *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt*, Boston 1981, p. 54, no. 29  
 George S. Keyes, *Esaias van den Velde 1587-1630*, Doornspijk 1984, pp. 318-19, no. E7

## PROVENANCE:

- Gift of H.H.M. van Hugten, Hilversum, 2008  
 (inv. no. RP-P-2008-86).



## 7 FERDINAND BOL (Dordrecht 1616-1680 Amsterdam)

*(Holy) Family in a Room*, 1643

Etching and burin, 183 x 218 mm

Signed centre right: *f BoL* 1643

Watermark: Foolscap with seven points and monogram MG

Ferdinand Bol was one of the few among Rembrandt's pupils to follow his teacher's lead in exploring the technique of etching and he produced a small oeuvre of prints. This picture of a family in a dark interior is his most successful etching. The immediate example for the composition and the extreme chiaroscuro is Rembrandt's etching of *St Jerome in his Study*, which is dated a year earlier (1642; Bartsch 105). Like Rembrandt, Bol depicted a dimly-lit room with such light as there is entering through an arched window on the right. Bol had also looked closely at Rembrandt's painting of the Holy Family (Louvre, Paris), from which he borrowed such elements as the breastfeeding mother and various details in the untidy interior. In Rembrandt's painting Joseph is working. Bol has the man standing behind the mother with a cloth, probably to wrap the child after he has been breastfed. Bol made a detailed drawing (The British Museum, inv. no. 8-11-337; Sumowski 95) in preparation for the print, which appears reversed as a result of the printing process. The tonality of the drawing is much lighter than the etching, which makes elements in it far easier to identify, such as the cat in the corner near the fireplace watching the intimate scene. On closer examination, however, it is possible to make out in the etching all kinds of details that appear in the drawing, including various pieces of furniture and household effects such as a cradle and a nursing mat leaning upright against the bedpost. Bol created the dark passages with a dense network of lines and scratches applied over one another. The illuminated areas, such as the folds of the bed curtain, are slightly less densely hatched. In the Rijksprentenkabinet there is an impression of the print on Oriental paper from the renowned Baron van Leyden Collection (inv. no. RP-P-B1-1990). Oriental paper is more resistant to the absorption of ink. Bol's already very dark etching is consequently rich in tone, but this also means that parts of it are hard to make out. The impression on seventeenth-century Western paper from the Van Hugten Collection is sharper and the tiniest

details are visible. Comparing the two impressions shows two outcomes of a quest for tone, as the endeavours of Dutch printmakers have been pithily described (cf. C.S. Ackley, 'Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt. The Quest for Printed Tone', in *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat. Boston (Museum of Fine Arts) 1981, pp. XIX-XXV).

## LITERATURE:

F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca. 1450-1700*, 72 vols., Amsterdam/Roosendaal/Rotterdam/Ouderkerk aan den IJssel 1949-2010, vol. 3, p. 18, no. 4

W. Sumowski, *Drawings of the Rembrandt School*, 6 vols., New York 1973, vol. 1, pp. 214-15, no. 95

C.S. Ackley, *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat. Boston (Museum of Fine Arts) 1981, p. 54, no. 29

L. van Sloten, *Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680). Etsen in eigen huis*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Museum van Loon) 2000, p. 26, no. 8

## PROVENANCE:

Erich von Rath (L. 2721); gift of H.H.M. van Hugten, Hilversum, 2008

(inv. no. RP-P-2008-83).



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**NOTE**

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