



LITERATURE:

E.P. Löffler, 'An Unknown Drawing by Jan Cornelisz. Vermeyen', *Master Drawings* 43 (2005), no. 1, pp. 102-05, fig. 1.
 J. Giltaij, *Kabinet van tekeningen: 16e en 17e eeuwse Hollandse en Vlaamse tekeningen uit een Amsterdamse verzameling*, exh. cat. Rotterdam (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen) and elsewhere 1976-77, no. 39 (as Cornelis van Cleve), repr.

PROVENANCE:

...; art market, New York, late 1960s; Johan Quirijn van Regteren Altena (1899-1980), Amsterdam (L. 4618); by descent; his heirs' sale, London (Christie's), 10 July 2014, no. 19, £ 158,500, to the dealer B. Haboldt, Amsterdam, Paris and New York for the museum, with support of the Rembrandt Association with additional funding from the Stortenbeker Fonds, the Stichting Nationaal Fonds Kunstbezit and the Mondriaan Fund
 (inv. no. RP-T-2014-62).

Acquisitions: Old Master Drawings

• ROBERT-JAN TE RIJDT, ALICE ANNE TOD AND
JANE SHOAF TURNER •

I JAN CORNELISZ VERMEYEN (Beverwijk c. 1500-c. 1559 Brussels)

Lamentation of Christ, c. 1532-35

Pen and black and brown ink, over traces of black chalk; squared for transfer in black chalk,
180 x 257 mm

Inscribed, on the verso, in brown ink: *J.V. Cleeff. de Sotte*

Born approximately ten kilometres north of Haarlem, Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen was a court painter in the service of Margaret of Austria (1480-1530) and Holy Roman Emperor Charles v (1500-1558). In 1535, he accompanied Charles v on a military expedition to Tunis and designed a set of twelve tapestries of the *Conquest of Tunis*; ten of the cartoons made for it are now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. A group of painted portraits is also attributed to him, as well as a few innovative nocturnal scenes, such as the Rijksmuseum's *Marriage at Cana* (inv. no. SK-A-4820).

Aside from the tapestry cartoons, we know of only a dozen other drawings by Vermeyen. The *Lamentation of Christ* – formerly attributed to Cornelis van Cleve (1520-after 1570) – is a recent addition to his oeuvre, having been recognized as by Vermeyen by Erik Löffler in 2005. On stylistic grounds, Löffler and Vermeyen specialist Hendrik Hoorn dated the drawing to around 1532-35, just before the Tunis expedition, making it the artist's earliest known drawing. The Virgin's thinly veiled breasts and the figure of Nicodemus (with a hammer) upper right, for instance, are similar to the Virgin's upper body and Joseph's pose in the museum's early painting of the *Holy Family*, which dates from around 1528-30 (inv. no. SK-C-1701).

Vermeyen's style was highly individual, if not outright eccentric. His work features claustro-

phobic compositions, with densely packed figures close to the picture plane. Each scene resembles a *tableau vivant* or medieval passion play, condensing the action into a single moment. Here the expressive figures react with a range of emotions – from the prostrate figure lower left, who bows her head in sorrow, to the swooning Virgin on the right with her limp body mimicking her dead son's. The visceral impact of Christ's death is amplified by the open mouths of some figures, such as St Joseph, evoking sounds of mourning and inviting the viewer to identify personally with their suffering and grief.

Vermeyen's distinctive crosshatching technique is particularly characteristic, seen as it is in his drawings and his twenty known etchings (impressions of which are extremely rare). Volume and striking effects of light and shade are created with dense passages of cross-hatching alternating with blank areas of paper. A drawing in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, *Woman at a Spinet* of around 1645, a preparatory study for the etching of the same subject, is similar to the *Lamentation of Christ*. The Rijksmuseum drawing may also have been preparatory for an etching, although the squaring in black chalk might suggest a study for a lost or unexecuted painting.

AAT

2 ANNIBALE CARRACCI (Bologna 1560-1609 Bologna)

Extensive Landscape with Figures and Animals on a Bridge, a Watermill to the Right, and a Fortified Town beyond (recto), c. 1588-90

Hillside Landscape Sketch with Figures and Buildings (verso), c. 1588-90

Pen and brown ink, 286 x 425 mm

Inscribed, on the old backing, in brown ink: *Famosissimo Disegno di Annibale Carracci*

With his brother Agostino Carracci (1557-1602) and his cousin Ludovico Carracci (1555-1619), Annibale pioneered the classical Baroque tradition in Bologna and Rome. He was among the first Italian artists to make landscape the subject rather than the 'backdrop' of a story – a trend more often associated with Dutch art. In the late fifteen-eighties, Annibale travelled to Parma, Venice and other North Italian cities, where he fell under the spell of Venetian landscape drawings and prints by Domenico Campagnola (c. 1500-1564) and his father, Giulio Campagnola (c. 1482-c.1515). The present drawing – from the celebrated Ellesmere Collection of 98 drawings by the Carracci, purchased by the 1st Earl of Ellesmere *en bloc* from Sir Thomas Lawrence – can be dated to the time of Annibale's visit to Venice in 1588 or shortly afterwards.

Like Domenico Campagnola, Annibale used fluent penwork and rhythmic crosshatching to create a panoramic landscape teeming with engaging details: peasant families and herdsmen with carts and animals wend their way over bridges and along winding paths, past a watermill with smoke billowing from its chimney, towards fortified castles, turrets, woods and mountains in the distance. The poetic mood of Venetian landscapes was influential for generations of artists, not only in Italy, but also in the North, where copies of Domenico Campagnola's drawings were made by the likes of Rembrandt (1606-1669) and Antoine Watteau (1684-1721).

JST

LITERATURE:

L. Bennett and M. Brady, *Old Master Drawings, Oil Sketches, and Sculpture, 1520-1900*, exh. cat. New York (W.M. Brady & Co.) 2018, no. 4

R. Holland, *The Carracci: Drawings and Paintings*, exh. cat. Newcastle-upon-Tyne (King's College) 1961, no. 101

J. Byam Shaw, *A Loan Exhibition of Drawings by the Carracci and other Masters from the Collection of the Earl of Ellesmere*, exh. cat. London (P. & D. Colnaghi) 1955, no. 25

P. A. Tomory, *The Ellesmere Collection of Old Master Drawings*, coll. cat. Leicester (Leicester Museum) 1954, no. 66

Catalogue of the Ellesmere Collection of Drawings at Bridgewater House, sale cat. London (Sotheby's) 1898, no. 102
Lawrence Gallery, Sixth Exhibition: A Catalogue of One Hundred Original Drawings by Lodovico, Agostino & Annibale Carracci, Collected by Sir Thomas Lawrence, exh. cat. London (Messrs. Woodburn's Gallery) 1836, no. 81

PROVENANCE:

...; collection of Count Moritz von Fries (1777-1826), Vienna (L. 2903); from whom acquired by Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), London (L. 2445), with 149 of his best drawings; from whom acquired by Francis Egerton (1800-1857), 1st Earl of Ellesmere (L. 2710b), with 97 other drawings by the Carracci; by descent to John Egerton (1915-2000), 6th Duke of Sutherland; his sale ('The Ellesmere Collection of Drawings by the Carracci and other Masters collected by Sir Thomas Lawrence'), London (Sotheby's), 11 July 1972, no. 56, £ 4,000, to the dealer A. Brod, London; ...; private collection, New York; by descent; from whom purchased by the dealer W.M. Brady & Co., New York; from whom, \$ 200,000, by the museum, with the support of Mr and Mrs Van Hulsen-Ognibeni, 2018

(inv. no. RP-T-2018-44).



3 GERARD VAN HONTHORST (Utrecht 1592-1656 Utrecht)

Study for a Double Portrait of a Noble Couple as Meleager and Atalanta, c. 1630-50

Pen and brush and grey wash, heightened with opaque white, over black chalk, on (faded) grey-blue cartridge paper, 192 x 253 mm

In 1620 Gerard van Honthorst returned to Utrecht from Italy, where he had spent five to ten years as the most famous member of the Utrecht Caravaggisti, renowned for their dramatically lit paintings inspired by the work of Caravaggio (1571-1610). On his return to the Netherlands, Van Honthorst attracted commissions from distinguished clients at home and abroad, including the House of Orange-Nassau, as well as royal and courtly circles in England, Bohemia and Denmark. With new patrons came a gradual shift in style and subject matter. He abandoned Caravaggesque religious and genre themes to cater for the growing taste for pastoral and Classical themes. He devoted himself to portraiture and large-scale allegorical works – trends that were sometimes combined, as in this *portrait historié* in an Arcadian setting.

Until recently, most known drawings by Van Honthorst dated from his early career: Caravaggesque subjects rendered with heavy brown wash and strong chiaroscuro effects. In 2014, however, a cache of twenty-seven drawings from the artist's later career (c. 1625-55) came on to the Paris art market (Saint Honoré Art Consulting), having been in a Belgian private collection for nearly a century. The present drawing and a few others were originally part of this same group but were separated from it at an unknown date: one drawing, *The Fortune-Teller*, was acquired by the Louvre, Paris, in 2006, others by the Amsterdam collector who generously donated this sheet, as well as inv. nos. RP-T-2015-52, RP-T-2016-13-1 and RP-T-2016-13-2 from the same ensemble.

The later drawings are executed in grey wash and white heightening, over black chalk, on grey-blue cartridge paper. Most are inscribed within a black chalk framing line by the artist (traces of which appear at the upper edge of this drawing). To judge by the numbering in graphite at the lower left of most sheets, the group must once have comprised many more studies than are known today. The highest number is '51'. Presumably the residue of a stock album from the artist's studio, the drawings would have offered prospective patrons a range of possible compositions and

portrait formats to be worked up into finished paintings.

No. 2 in the ex-Saint Honoré Art Consulting group, now in a private collection, is an alternative composition for the very same half-length double portrait of a couple as Meleager and Atalanta. The figures with their two dogs are set against a landscape rather than an architectural backdrop, and Meleager is handing the Calydonian boar's head to his beloved Atalanta.

Given the facial resemblance to the couple sketched in another of the sheets from Paris, no. 43, *Young Woman with a Floral Garland Seated beside a Shepherd with a Lute, Presumed Portraits of Frederick V and Elizabeth Stuart*, now in a private collection, the pair represented in the two Meleager compositions can be tentatively identified as Frederick V (1596-1632) and Elizabeth Stuart (1596-1662), the Winter King and Queen of Bohemia, who were in exile in The Hague. In 1630 Van Honthorst was appointed their court painter and from 1637 until 1651 he divided his time between The Hague and Utrecht.

JST

PROVENANCE:

...; ? private collection, Belgium, by the early 20th century; ...; purchased from the dealer B. Haboldt, Amsterdam, Paris and New York, by a private collector, Amsterdam, before 2014; by whom donated to the museum, 2015

(inv. no. RP-T-2015-51).



4 PAULUS POTTER (Enkhuizen 1625-1654 Amsterdam)

Landscape with a Herd of Eight Cows and a Peasant, 1641

Pen and brown ink, with two shades of grey wash, the outlines indented, 178 x 263 mm

Signed and dated, lower right, in brown ink: *Paulus · Potter · f 1641*Inscribed, on verso, at upper edge, in a seventeenth-century hand, in brown ink: *Paulus Potter*

No other Golden Age Dutch artist is more renowned for his cows. During the nineteenth century, Paulus Potter's huge, life-sized painting of *The Young Bull* (235.5 x 339 cm) of 1647 – one of the most famous works in the Mauritshuis – was as popular with members of the Dutch public as Rembrandt's *Night Watch*.

As a teenager, Potter studied under his less talented father, Pieter Symonsz Potter (1597/1601-1652). Until the present signed and dated drawing from 1641 emerged, only three drawings from his early years were known, all executed in graphite on vellum in his father's miniaturist, somewhat pedestrian style. The earliest, thought to date from around 1640, when Potter was only fifteen, is a *Boar Hunt* (Amsterdam Museum). Like the Rijksmuseum's new drawing, the other two are both dated 1641, when Potter was seventeen. One is a mythological scene, *Mercury and Argus* (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), the other another *Boar Hunt* (Städel Museum, Frankfurt-am-Main). None of these juvenile works is of a commonplace subject.

By contrast, the Rijksmuseum drawing is Potter's earliest surviving effort at depicting an everyday scene in the Dutch countryside. Eight standing and recumbent cows are scattered over a hillock, bathed in early morning or late afternoon sun, with a cowherd in the background. These are, in effect, the most famous cow painter's very first cows! Despite the naturalistic appearance of the scene, the drawing may not, however, have been made *en plein air*. The similar pose of three of the cattle implies that he may have turned to a small studio model to study the animal's bone structure from the front, the side and the back.

The drawing was used by Potter two years later for *The Cowherd*, an etching in reverse dated 1643. The drawing is incised for transfer to the copper plate. We do not know whether the teenager had already planned to make a print in 1641 or whether he indented the drawn composition with a stylus only later. In 1649 – only a few years before Potter's life was cut short by

tuberculosis at the age of twenty-eight – he reworked and republished the copper plate. At that time, he 'improved' his juvenile effort, adjusting the position of the right foreleg of the first cow coming down the path on the far left so that its position was a bit more natural.

After Potter's death, his widow – perhaps in an attempt to maintain or enhance his artistic reputation – made some of his original drawings and etchings available to the Hague artist Marcus de Bije (1639-after 1690), who published several series of prints in the manner of the eighteen to twenty etchings Potter made during his lifetime. The plate for the print after this drawing must have been among those his widow sold or gave away (though perhaps not to De Bije himself). It went through three later states, with the addition of the names and addresses of other later printmakers and publishers.

JST

PROVENANCE:

...; private collection, The Netherlands; from which purchased by Ineke Hellingman, Amsterdam; from whom, € 90,000, to the museum, with the support of the I.Q. van Regteren Altena Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds and partial gift of Mrs I. Hellingman and Mr L. Baljon, Amsterdam, 2015 (inv. no. RP-T-2015-47).



- 5 CLAES VAN BERESTEYN (Haarlem c. 1627/29-1684 Haarlem)
Dune Landscape with Gnarled Trees, c. 1670
 Point of the brush and black ink, with grey wash, 156 x 176 mm

The Rijksmuseum holds at least one impression of all nine etchings by the talented amateur Claes (or Nicolaes) van Beresteyn, but, until now, did not have a single one of his drawings. Little is known about this art-loving dilettante, aside from the fact that he was from an aristocratic Haarlem family – a son of the distinguished and wealthy lawyer Paulus van Beresteyn (1588-1636) and his third wife, Catharina Both van der Eem (1589-1666) – and was mentioned in Haarlem guild records as a pupil of Salomon de Braij (1597-1664). Claes had an older brother, Arnoldus van Beresteyn (c. 1620-1654), who was apparently also an artist, but today we know of no works of art by him.

The first art historian to study the work of Claes van Beresteyn was Horst Gerson, who in 1940 attributed to the artist a total of thirty-eight drawings, two of which are signed with the monogram 'C VB.' Although one new, similarly monogrammed drawing has since come to light (P. & N. de Boer Foundation, Amsterdam), recent research by Jeroen Giltaij has drastically reduced Van Beresteyn's drawn oeuvre. Giltaij reassigned most unsigned drawings once thought to be by Van Beresteyn to the Rotterdam-born artist Adriaen Hendricksz Verboom (b. c. 1628), who was active in Amsterdam rather than Haarlem.

This sheet is one of very few secure examples of the unsigned works still accepted as autograph works by Van Beresteyn. Although neither signed, nor connected with any of his etchings, the stellate clumps of leaves, trees, branches, and grass are rendered with his characteristic very fine, short pen lines in a delicate, quasi-pointillist style – as if each leaf were drawn using an etching needle. The gnarled, twisted forms of the tree trunks are also typical of his way of composing landscape motifs. Giltaij described his drawings and prints as if made by 'a child who meticulously recorded every single leaf', but that abstract sense of overall pattern – like the work of a nineteenth-century Impressionist or Post-Impressionist painter – is what lends Van Beresteyn's draughtsmanship and etching technique its exquisite charm.

JST

LITERATURE:

- J. Giltaij, 'The Drawings of Claes van Beresteyn and Adriaen Verboom', *Master Drawings* 55 (2017), no. 3, p. 323, fig. 7
 J. Giltaij, *Kabinet van tekeningen: 16e en 17e eeuwse Hollandse en Vlaamse tekeningen uit een Amsterdamse verzameling*, exh. cat. Rotterdam (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen) and elsewhere 1976-77, no. 13, repr.
 H. Gerson, *Leven en werken van Claes v. Beresteyn*, The Hague 1940, no. B 5, repr.

PROVENANCE:

- ...; from the dealer H. Kuyt, Haarlem, fl. 10, to Johan Quirijn van Regteren Altena (1899-1980), Amsterdam (L. 4618), 1929; by descent; his heirs' sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 10 December 2014, no. 214, € 86,271, to the dealer B. Haboldt, Amsterdam, Paris and New York, for the museum, with support from the Rembrandt Association, the VSB Fund and the Stichting Nationaal Fonds Kunstbezit (inv. no. RP-T-2016-96).



6 JEAN GRANDJEAN (Amsterdam 1752-1781 Rome)

View in the Colosseum with a Monk in the Foreground, 1779

Watercolour, with pen and point of brush and grey ink, over a sketch in black chalk, 407 x 532 mm
Signed, dated and annotated, lower right, in black ink, *Jn Grandjean F[ec; cut off] | int Coliseo Roma | 1779*

Jean Grandjean died in Rome shortly before his thirtieth birthday. His loss was a great blow to Dutch art. When he set off for Italy, Grandjean was regarded as the artist who would be able to raise Dutch art to an international level on his return. After training under several artists, including Jurriaan Andriessen (1742-1819) under whom he painted wall hangings, as well as drawing and painting Arcadian landscapes, he also aspired to become a history painter. On 2 June 1779, supported financially by two art collectors and provided with letters of introduction, Grandjean journeyed by boat to Civitavecchia, where he arrived on 6 July. After an obligatory quarantine of two weeks, he reached the Eternal City on 21 July.

As the first artist from the Northern Netherlands to take a study trip to the South for more than sixty years, Grandjean almost certainly joined the group of German artists in Rome. A series of fine academy studies of male nudes reveals that he did not cut himself off from other artists. Another version of one of these drawings, drawn by a different artist, shows the same model in the same pose from a slightly different angle. It is a great pity that his extensive correspondence with his two patrons has not survived. Grandjean also sent them a large number of drawings, some of which were then sold to other collectors. The sixty or seventy first-rate coloured landscapes that arrived from Rome were particularly popular. After Grandjean's death, the drawings and sketches he left were sent to Amsterdam, where Daniel Dupré (1751-1817) worked up the most important sheets.

Grandjean was one of the many artists who frequently drew the Colosseum. For example, the Rijksmuseum already had three of his drawings of the ruin of the amphitheatre (inv. nos. RP-T-1898-A-3563, RP-T-1953-336 and RP-T-2014-13-58). They are all uncoloured, however, and the rendering in pen and ink predominates. This drawing and another purchased at the same time (inv. no. RP-T-2015-54-2), both from 1779, are larger, coloured and executed more sketchily with outlines in black chalk.

Grandjean clearly based his use of black chalk on drawings by seventeenth-century Italianate artists that he had seen in collections in Amsterdam. This is evident in the way he depicted such a large part of the ruin at close quarters, not from afar, as was more usual in the eighteenth century. The other three Colosseum drawings in the Rijksmuseum date from 1780-81 and are drawn in a more 'Neoclassical' style in the manner of Grandjean's German contemporaries.

RJTR

PROVENANCE:

...; sale, Jacobus Buys (1724-1801, Amsterdam), Jan Swart (1754-1794, Amsterdam) and Leendert Viervant (1752-1801, Amsterdam) [and nine others, according to the annotated catalogue in the RKD], Amsterdam (P. van der Schley et al.), 16 February 1802 *sqq.*, Album B, no. 5, with pendant, no. 4 [both consigned by Letter A, being not Buys, Swart or Viervant], fl. 21 for both, to Jacobus Vollenhoven (1755-1821); his sale, Amsterdam (J. de Vries et al.), 11 February 1822 *sqq.*, Album M, no. 8, with pendant, fl. 18 for both, to the dealer E.M. Engelberts, Amsterdam; ...; the Galerie Daniel Greiner, Paris; from whom, through the mediation of the Fondation Custodia, Paris, with RP-T-2015-54-2, € 13,000 for both, to the museum, with the support of the Fonds Beukenhorst/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2015

(inv. no. RP-T-2015-54-1).



7 CHRISTIAAN ANDRIESSEN (Amsterdam 1775-1846 Amsterdam)

Children Clustered around a Bonfire, 1806

Pen and watercolour, 177 x 225 mm

Inscribed, lower centre, by the artist: 25 oct. | een St. Martens Vuurtje

Inscribed, on verso, lower left, by Veldhuizen: J. Andriessen

For four years (1805-08), the Amsterdam artist Christiaan Andriessen kept a visual diary of drawings. These provide a personal glimpse into the private lives of his family and friends, as well as a topical record of political events and impressions of everyday street life in Amsterdam. Andriessen began the diary on New Year's Day 1805 and for the first two years tried to make a daily illustration of a scene he had observed or participated in. Over the course of the next two years he made a weekly drawing. Some are simple pen drawings; others, like this one, are attractive, finished watercolours. We know of some seven hundred diary sheets, a large proportion of which are now in Amsterdam, in the Royal Antiquarian Society (259 drawings), the Stadsarchief (174 drawings) and the Rijksmuseum (27 drawings). Originally intended for private amusement, these diary illustrations now shed important historical light on daily life and artistic circles in the Netherlands in the early nineteenth century.

This charming example shows a group of children gathered around a bonfire. The drawing is dated 25 October and, according to the inscription, the scene must have reminded Andriessen of the traditional bonfires lit for the Feast of St Martin – a medieval autumn festival celebrated on 11 November. On St Martin's Eve bonfires are lit and children carry lanterns through the streets after dark, a tradition still popular in many parts of the Netherlands today. The practice probably started as a way of begging for alms, with children carrying lanterns made from hollowed-out turnips or beets knocking on doors and singing humorous St Martin songs in exchange for sweets or fruit.

The figure of the little girl on the left of the drawing, with her expansive arm gesture and wide open mouth, could be singing such a song. A warm light radiates from the bonfire, and the long shadows cast by the children create a pattern reminiscent of the sun's crepuscular rays. Details such as the play of colours on the children's faces and the tiny embers floating in the night sky are treated with great care. Andriessen seems to

have been fascinated by the effects of light and shade. Many other diary drawings feature scenes starkly illuminated by fire, candlelight or light streaming in from an open window.

This interest might betray the influence of Christiaan's father, Jurriaan Andriessen (1742-1819), who had to be much concerned with light and perspective when commissioned to decorate a room with his painted wall hangings. Christiaan studied under his father and at the Amsterdam Drawing Academy. He aspired to be a history painter, and he and his father struggled to elevate the status of the artist at a time when painted wallpaper was going out of fashion. Their petitions to the king went unanswered. Although we know of no history paintings by Christiaan today, he is recognized for his remarkable drawn diary.

AAT

PROVENANCE:

The artist's family; by descent; acquired by the dealer R.A. Veldhuizen; the heirs' sale, Amsterdam (R.W.P. de Vries), 16 February 1903 *sqq.*, no. 230 ('*St. Maartens vuurtje. Licht-effect bij avond. Zeer fraai in kleuren*'), fl. 3,25, to the dealer R.A. Veldhuizen, Amsterdam; ...; collection Johan Quirijn van Regteren Altena (1899-1980), Amsterdam (L. 4618); his sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 10 December 2014, no. 45, € 9,117.50, to the dealer B. Haboldt, Amsterdam, Paris and New York, for the museum, with support from the Rembrandt Association, the Stichting Nationaal Fonds Kunstbezit and the VSB Fund

(inv. no. RP-T-2016-35).



8 JOSEPHUS AUGUSTUS KNIP (Tilburg 1777-1847 Berlicum)

View of a Section of the Aurelian Walls, Rome, c. 1809-12

Watercolour and grey wash, over pencil, 368 x 502 mm

Inscribed, in pencil: at lower left, *deese wegh is altoos | beset met driften van ossen*; at lower centre, *Murs de Rome*

'A sense of time and a feeling for beauty.' That is the Rijksmuseum's motto or concept behind its integrated chronological display of art and history objects. Yet 'timeless' is the word that best describes the spectacular group of forty-six watercolours by Josephus Augustus Knip, purchased from the heirs of Johan Quirijn van Regteren Altena.

In Italy from 1809 to 1812, Knip produced over five hundred works, mainly watercolours of sites in and around Rome. The watercolours – including multiple-sheet panoramas spanning more than a metre and a half – were kept in a portfolio for later use in paintings. Sadly, for an artist who worked in such extraordinary detail, he lost the sight of one eye in the late eighteenth-twenties and by 1832 he was completely blind.

Knip's Italian watercolours capture the warm glow of the Roman *campagna*. They are executed in a hyper-realistic Neoclassical style, using a subtle, muted palette with a distinctly 'modern' flavour. Here we see a section of the eighteen kilometre-long ancient Roman defensive wall begun under Emperor Aurelian (r. 270-75), hence its name. Using a low viewpoint, Knip stressed the structure's massive walls (3.5 metres thick and 8 metres high). As he amusingly noted in his inscription: herds of oxen regularly caused traffic jams on the road along the wall.

Later members of the Knip family did not enjoy as much success as the first three generations. Grandson Alfred Ronner (1852-1901) predeceased his mother, the animal painter Henriëtte Ronner-Knip (1821-1909), who was survived by two artist daughters, Alice Ronner (1857-1957) and Emma Ronner (1860-1930), minor still-life painters in Belgium. Alfred – who in 1880 competed unsuccessfully for the Prix de Rome – eventually looked after his mother's financial affairs and began selling works by family members during the late nineteenth century. His sisters continued the deaccessioning of the family heritage in sales in 1911 (The Hague) and 1916 (Amsterdam). The forty-six works acquired by the Rijksmuseum in 2014 belong to a group of 111 watercolours

of Italian views said to have been consigned by a Knip descendant to a minor Amsterdam auction in 1940. The sale included works by 'A. Ronner' and probably Alfred's mother (a typical picture of cats and kittens by 'H.R.'). The Rijksmuseum later bought ten items from the buyer at that sale (the dealer Abraham Querido), but the fifty best works had already been chosen by the discerning Van Regteren Altena.

JST

LITERATURE:

J. Shoaf Turner, 'Tijdloos mooi. De 46 aquarellen uit de verzameling Van Regteren Altena door Josephus Augustus Knip voor het Rijksmuseum', *Bulletin van de Vereniging Rembrandt* 24 (2014), pp. 20-25, fig. 2

I. Oud et al., *In de ban van Italië. Tekeningen uit een Amsterdamse verzameling*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Amsterdam Historisch Museum), 1995, no. 68, repr.

E. Bergvelt, *J.A. Knip (1777-1847). Landschapschilder*, unpublished diss., Amsterdam 1974, p. 274, no. 185

PROVENANCE:

Artist's estate; by descent; anonymous sale [? consigned by a descendant], Amsterdam (L. Gijsselman and Zoon), 2 April 1940, one of 111 items in nos. 3625-3635, to the dealer 'Querido,' Amsterdam, for Johan Quirijn van Regteren Altena (1899-1980), Amsterdam; his heirs; from whom, € 1,600,000, with 45 other watercolours of Italian views by Knip to the museum, with the support of the Gerhards Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, the VSB Fund, the Mondriaan Fund, the Rembrandt Association and its Hendrik de Jong Fund and Liente Dons Fund, 2014

(inv. no. RP-T-2014-14-43).



9 GEORGE HENDRIK BREITNER (Rotterdam 1857-1923 Amsterdam)

Self-Portrait, c. 1883

Black chalk and charcoal, 174 x 268 mm (portrait), 350 x 265 mm (sheet)

On the recto also a sketch of a woman, her head supported on her left arm.

On the verso a woman with her right hand above the head of a second woman or child.

Inscribed, in pencil: lower left of the self-portrait, *G.H. Breitner*; on verso, lower centre,*G.H. Breitner*

In 1886, at the age of twenty-nine, after training in The Hague and six months in Paris, George Hendrik Breitner moved to Amsterdam. It was there that he was able to realize his ambition to be *le peintre du peuple* and depict the beauty of everyday life. This consisted chiefly of cityscapes with all kinds of passers-by (primarily maids), images of building work (Amsterdam expanded enormously between 1885 and 1910) and scenes featuring horse trams. In his workshop Breitner also painted many female nudes and a famous series of pictures of young women dressed in Japanese kimonos, relaxing languorously or painting their faces. He worked a good deal with Isaac Israëls (1865-1934) and Willem Witsen (see no. 10). For a time Israëls adopted the same style, and Breitner shared his love of photography with Witsen. Many of Breitner's compositions have photographic cropping. After around 1900, Breitner's art had passed its peak and, constantly plagued by financial problems, the artist was overtaken by all kinds of new movements such as Pointillism and Luminism.

Studies about Breitner always focus on the eighty-four small sketchbooks in the Rijksmuseum, which were purchased for 1,200 guilders at the artist's workshop sale by the Amsterdam auction house of Frederik Muller & Co on 13 May 1924, lot no. 92. It emerges from the sale catalogue that it was hoped the entire group would end up in a public institution. What has always been overlooked is the fact that the next item was four large sketchbooks 'in which are several fine, large sketches and designs'. That lot went to the art dealer S.J. Sala in The Hague for 510 guilders. From his personal copy of the catalogue in the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD, no. 201010878), it seems that he had initially limited his bids to a hundred guilders for each book but was able to go higher because he had been able to buy earlier lots that he wanted relatively cheaply. This sum of 510 guilders suggests a competing bidder, possibly the Rijksmuseum. Be that as it may, Sala did not wait long

before he sold the finest sheets from his sketchbooks, which must have included this self-portrait. He was familiar with the market for the artist's work by then because in February 1923 – four months before Breitner's death – he had staged an exhibition of forty-six of his works. Unfortunately, Sala's archives were not available from the RKD in 2018 because of work on the system.

The self-portrait must date from around 1883. At that time, Breitner wanted to become a portrait painter, so he practised with painted and drawn portraits of himself, possibly because he had no money to pay models. The composition of some of them, in which he looks down on the viewer, is particularly striking. In two less notable portraits in the Johannesburg Kunstgalerie (1882-83) and the Dordrechts Museum (1883), Breitner portrayed himself as he might portray a client. They are unmistakably of the same man as the one depicted in black chalk behind his drawing board in the present work, with a similar kind of engaging look at the viewer.

RJTR

PROVENANCE:

Most probably a page from one of the four large sketchbooks in the estate sale of G.H. Breitner, Amsterdam (Frederik Muller & Co), 13 May 1924, nos. 93-96, fl. 510 for all four, to the dealer S.J. Sala, The Hague; ...; sale, Amsterdam (S.J. Mak van Waay), 1 November 1966 *sqq.*, no. 103 (framed), fl. 800; ...; sale, Amsterdam (Arts & Antiques Group), 18 June 2018, no. 155, € 6,000, to the museum, with the support of the Otto van Noppen Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds
(inv. no. RP-T-2018-64).



10 WILLEM WITSEN (Amsterdam 1860-1923 Amsterdam)

Carriages on Victoria Embankment, London, c. 1890

Watercolour and gouache, over a sketch in black chalk, 485 x 680 mm

Willem Witsen came from a well-to-do Amsterdam family. This comfortable position influenced his art. He was at the centre of a circle of artists and scholars who would play a decisive role in the cultural climate in the Netherlands in the eighteen-eighties and -nineties. Witsen began by painting figures and portraits, then moved on to landscapes and scenes of peasants at work. Around 1896-97, however, he started to specialize in cityscapes. Whereas Breitner (see no. 9) and Isaac Israëls (1865-1934) focused on the dynamism of urban life, Witsen chose to picture the city as a monument of timeless beauty. The compositions of his cityscapes are particularly strong; the earliest of them attest to his admiration for the work of James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). Like Whistler, Witsen was also an important etcher. He usually made three finished versions of his scenes: a painting, a watercolour and an etching.

In October 1888 Witsen decided to move to London, not least because he wanted to follow an English girlfriend. He spent so much time with friends from Amsterdam who stayed with him – Willem Kloos, Jacobus van Looy and Eduard Karsen – that he did almost no work in the first nine months, but he absorbed a great many impressions. He explored the Thames, taking ‘a five-hour walk over bridges and through that great city; I love to walk alone and just eat in a bar and then go to the National Gallery etc.’ In February 1890 Witsen started to work up his impressions into twelve, mostly large etchings, which he produced in five months. The subjects were Trafalgar Square, and the docks, bridges and shipping on the Thames. What fascinated him above all were the hansom cabs drawn up here and there along the pavements or under the bridges, waiting for fares. Preliminary studies for the majority of these etchings – and the watercolours and paintings linked to them – can be found in Witsen’s sketchbooks in the Rijksmuseum, including the studies for *Carriages on Victoria Embankment* (inv. nos. RP-T-1964-209 (p. 21) and RP-T-1964-217 (p. 47)). The print in etching and aquatint after the watercolour discussed here was executed in reverse and the background was changed. The dynamic element

of the moving cab, unusual for Witsen, has gone, the embankment and the trees in front of it are much more emphatic and the fog effect is barely there.

To the art connoisseur H.P. Bremmer (1871-1956), it was precisely this depiction of the fog that was so special with its ‘fineness of atmospheric blurring’. He knew of nothing like it by English artists. The scene is conveyed in a very subtle, muted contrast in different black and white tones. Here Witsen ‘brought the moment of such a grey-lit day to the ultimate in sober colour depiction’.

RJTR

LITERATURE:

H.P. Bremmer, *Moderne Kunstwerken* 8, IV, Amsterdam 1910, no. 25

J.F. Heijbroek, ‘Impressies uit de “reuzestad”. Het verblijf van Willem Witsen in Londen (1888-1891)’, in F.W. Kuyper and B.C. Sliggers (eds.), *Liber Amicorum A.G. van der Steur*, Haarlem 1988, pp. 80-81

J.F. Heijbroek and E.L. Wouthuysen, *Portret van een kunsthandel. De firma Van Wisselingh en zijn compagnons 1838-heden*, Amsterdam/Zwolle 1999, p. 88

I.M. de Groot, in I.M. de Groot et al. (eds.), *Willem Witsen 1860-1923. Schilderijen, tekeningen, prenten, foto's*, Bussum 2003, p. 201, cat. no. 63 (about the print)

PROVENANCE:

...; the dealer E.J. van Wisseling & Co., Amsterdam, 1910 [unfortunately Van Wisseling’s archives were not available from the RKD in 2018 because of work on the system]; ...; Johanna Insinger (1903-1999, Bilthoven); ? from whom acquired and thence by descent; anonymous sale, Amsterdam (Christie’s), 27 June 2017, no. 207, € 55,000, to the museum, with the support of the Otto van Noppen Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds

(inv. no. RP-T-2017-37).



RP T-2017-37