Between

Prints from Leiden University in Museum Bredius

the lines







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A collaboration between Museum Bredius and Leiden University Special Collections

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At Museum Bredius (The Hague, the Netherlands)



Introduction: Between the Lines

Here, at Museum Bredius, twenty-one prints made by Dutch artists between 1580 and 1700 are on loan from the Leiden University Special Collections. All prints depict scenes and motifs that also appear in the paintings of the museum, such as a woman baking pancakes, musical companies, merry drinkers, quacks, and mythological figures. Often a deeper meaning is displayed in these stories and motifs. However, this is not always obvious at first glance. A closer look is needed between the lines.

For the prints, those lines can be taken quite literally. After all, these depictions are composed of black ink lines on paper. In this exhibition, engravings as well as etchings are on display. For both printing techniques, the image is cut into a copper plate before being transferred onto paper. The design drawing for this was often made by an artist other than the one who made the engraving or etching. The design drawing was often made by an artist, whereas the engraving of the plate was done by a specialized engraver or etcher. That is why you will sometimes find two artists' names on one print.

The image in the copper plate was inked and then printed with a printing press, resulting in a mirrored image of the original design. Hundreds of copies could be made from one copper plate. As a result, prints were much cheaper than paintings and became widespread. They were bought by a wide audience, including artists. Prints were an effective means of spreading ideas about behaviour and morality. Knowledge about nature and classical antiquity also became known through prints.

This exhibition was curated by a group of international students from the Master Arts and Culture. For their course "Art on Paper", each student chose a painting from Museum Bredius and two prints from the Leiden University Special Collections. The aim was to connect themes, visual traditions, and meanings in Dutch paintings and prints from the period 1580-1700.

Leiden University owns more than 100.000 prints and 12.000 drawings which were brought together over a period of two hundred years. For students, artworks from this collection are inspiring sources of research. In this exhibition, they invite you to tag along.

List of Artworks

Paintings from Museum Bredius:

- Allegory of Death (1602) Hendrick Aerts
- Bacchus Comforts Ariadne on Naxos (c.1630-1640) Pieter Potter
- Bunch of Grapes Hung in Niche (c.1600-1625) Pieter van den Bosch
- Child Feeding a Cat (c.1660-1669) Cornelis Bisschop
- Drinking Monk (c.1644-1704) Egbert (I) van Heemskerck
- Fair (c.1640-1696) Cornelis Bellekin
- Music-making Company (c.1670-1679) Frans Sant-Acker
- The Pancake Maker (1678) Pieter Gerritsz van Roestraeten
- Satyr and the Farmer (c.1660-1663) Jan Steen
- Vanitas (c.1621-1628) Willem Claesz. Heda

Prints from Leiden University Special Collections:

- All-conquering Death, Who Pierces All Mankind with Arrows (1610) Boëtius Adamsz Bolswert after David Vinckboons
- Astronomy or Astrology (c.1578) Cornelis Cort after Frans Floris
- Bacchus and Ariadne as Lovers (c1616) Jacob Matham after David Vinckboons I
- Blackwork Ornaments: Insects and Birds Surrounding a Triangular Ornament (c.1628) Henri Toutin
- Consequences of Drinking: The Young Drinker (c.1595-1600) Hendrick Goltzius
- Discordia, or The Bad Household (1589) Crispijn de Passe after Maerten de Vos
- Father Time and the Personification of Diligence and Labour (c.1589-1611) Crispijn de Passe the Elder after Maerten de Vos
- Father Time and the Personification of Negligence and Slackness (c.1589-1611) Crispijn de Passe the Elder after Maerten de Vos
- Great Village Fair (1685) Cornelis Dusart
- Homo Bulla (1594) Hendrick Goltzius
- Insect and Mythical Creature (c.1594) Nicolaes de Bruyn
- Musical Company at Night (c.1590-1634) Pieter de Jode I after Adam van Noort
- Smoking Farmer with Pipe (c.1696-1727) Matthijs Pool after Cornelis Dusart
- Sleeping Venus and Cupid Spied by Satyrs (c.1610-1612) Werner van den Valckert
- The Large Cat (c.1657) Cornelis Visscher
- The Pancake Woman (1635) Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn
- The Quack (c.1603-1652) Jan van de Velde II after Willem Buytewech
- The Satyr and the Peasant (c.1621) Lucas Vorsterman after Jacob Jordaens
- The Virgin and Child with the Cat and Snake (1654) Rembrandt Harmensz van Riin
- Vanitas: Death and the Maiden (c. c.1610) Andries Jacobsz Stock after Jacob de Gheyn II
- Vanitas, Vanitatum et Omnia Vanitas (c.1600-1607) Jan Saenredam after Abraham Bloemaert
- Shrove Tuesday: Dutch Kitchen with Wafer Bakery (1567) Pieter van der Heyden after Hieronymus Bosch

Exhibition Guide

The Pancake Maker



Pieter Gerritsz van Roestraeten (1630-1700)

The Pancake Maker

1678

Oil on canvas

A woman is making pancakes in the kitchen, a baby in a crib and a young child as her only companions. Genre scenes involving women doing housework like cooking or taking care of children were common in this period. The kitchen is brought up as a female-dominated space, while the outside world was seen as the domain of men. The pancakes themselves also hold meaning in Dutch culture as a festive treat, especially during Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras).



Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606-1669) The Pancake Woman 1635 Etching

An old woman sits in the middle of a humble room cooking with a focused expression. Around her, toddlers, boys, and other women complete the busy scene. Genre paintings and prints depicting women making humble pancakes in a domestic setting were rather popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Netherlands, and they reflect the societal expectations for women in this period as caregivers of their families. In this etching, Rembrandt masterfully draws our attention to the pancake maker by using darker lines and defined hatching, while her surroundings are lighter and almost look unfinished.



Pieter van der Heyden (1530-1572) after Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516)

Shrove Tuesday: Dutch Kitchen with Wafer Bakery 1567

Engraving

Anyone craving waffles? It's Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras), a time for self-reflection and repentance in the Christian faith. It is also the last day of Carnival, one last chance to indulge in rich foods like the waffles being made by the woman in the centre of this print. Her companions enjoy the pleasures that will be frowned upon in the coming weeks, but in doing so they turn almost foolish. And a fool, when not cautious enough, will be caught by the Devil in disguise, represented here by the whimsical figure of the pilgrim owl.

Vanitas



Willem Claesz. Heda (1594-1680) Vanitas c.1621-1628 Oil on panel

The glass is empty, time is up. The evanescence of life is the central topic of this composition. The Haarlem master Heda was known for his still life paintings, of which this Vanitas is a wonderful example. The skull, upside-down glass, pipe, candle holder, and embers, are all symbols of how fleeting our earthly existence is, and how meaningless material objects are after we take our final breath.



Jan Saenredam (1565-1607) after Abraham Bloemaert (1564-1651)

Vanitas, Vanitatum et Omnia Vanitas
c.1600-1607

Engraving

A beautiful lady surrounded by smoke is the central figure of this intricate engraving by Jan Saenredam. The image refers Renaissance's of female to the visual tradition personifications of vanitas: the unavoidable decay of life and beauty. While the usual mirror attribute is absent, the theme of vanitas is symbolised by the smoke escaping the urn in her hand. The objects on the table, including a crown and a sceptre, also suggest a similar ephemerality of earthly possessions and power. A calligraphic border of the famous biblical passage and title of this print "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity" surrounds the image.



Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) Homo Bulla 1594 Engraving

Who will be spared from Death? The transience of humanity is the focus of this popular engraving by Hendrick Goltzius. A putto or amoretto blows bubbles with a thin pipe and contemplates them inquisitively. A human skull, a cloud of smoke, and a lily surround him as additional vanitas symbols. The inscription accompanying the print is a short poem in Latin written by Franco Estius, a Catholic humanist and friend of Goltzius. The last two lines read: "the life of man, already ebbing in the newborn babe, vanishes like a bubble or like fleeting smoke".



Matthijs Pool (1676-1740) after Cornelis Dusart (1660-1704) Smoking Farmer with Pipe, from the series Farmers and Farmers' Wives c.1696-1727 Etching and engraving

Although very different from the usual vanitas imagery like in Heda's painting, this print of a smoking farmer conveys the same moralising message. Tobacco, although popular in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic for its supposed health benefits, is used here as a negative symbol of overconsumption and decadence. The ephemeral quality of the smoke would be instantly associated with the biblical passage "For my days vanish like smoke" and the motto "GLORIA MUNDI FUMUS" inscribed on the border, both referencing the transience of life. The inscription on the bottom reaffirms the message stating that political turmoil is "just some smoke".



Andries Jacobsz Stock (c.1580-1648) after Jacob de Gheyn II (1565-1629)

Vanitas: Death and the Maiden

c.1610 Engraving

Gold, jewels, and beauty. All pointless when Death knocks on your door. The maiden in Stock's engraving, sitting at her toilet table and dressed in opulent clothing, faces the reality of her mortal life. In this print the personification of Death is not the more common skeleton, but a very old decrepit woman. She creeps behind the young lady holding a winged hourglass and pointing a flaming arrow at her chest. The emphasis on favouring a morally sound life without vices and material decadence is a classic theme of vanitas depictions such as this one.

Quacks and Village Fairs



Cornelis Bellekin (1625-1696)
Fair
c.1640-1696
Oil on panel

A lively scene of a town fair is portrayed in this lovely painting by Cornelis Bellekin. The townspeople enjoy the Commedia dell'Arte performance, a theatre style originally from Italy that gained popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The two foreign gentlemen on the left, combined with the masts of ships peeking from behind the houses, indicate that this location is close to a port. On the right side, a couple and some children listen attentively to the Quack (a fake doctor) trying to sell them some miracle medicine.



Jan van de Velde II (1593-1641) after Willem Buytewech (c.1591-1624)

The Quack c.1603-1652

Engraving

A conman, a fake doctor, and a fraudulent businessman; that is the identity of the quack. While in Bellekin's painting "Fair" he is part of a bigger scene, in this rich engraving the quack is the central figure. Looking directly at us from the right side of the print, he is in the middle of convincing some unaware victims to pay for the miracle treatments displayed on a little table. The inscription "People want to be deceived" points to the lack of morals of charlatans like the quack, always trying to benefit at the expense of others.



Cornelis Dusart (1660-1704)

Great Village Fair

1685

Etching

This dynamic etching by painter and draughtsman Cornelis Dusart is a great representation of his typical peasant life scenes, very much influenced by his master Adriaen van Ostade. He skilfully captures the frenzy and chaos of a village fair with actors performing, a quack selling potions, people dancing, playing music, and drinking to their heart's content. Children also enjoy the festive atmosphere in the town while playing with their toys. Seemingly just a cheerful scene, what Dusart is really showing is the classist moral critique of peasants always indulging in too much alcohol, causing them to become unruly and improper.

Consequences of Drinking



Egbert (I) van Heemskerck (1634-1704)

Drinking Monk

c.1644-1704

Oil on panel

A monk wearing his habit holds his drink with an almost silly expression. In this painting, Van Heemskerck takes a mocking stance in portraying a figure that should embody seriousness and modesty, probably made as criticism against the Catholic Church. The monk indulges in wine, an earthly pleasure he is technically not allowed, and even holds the goblet from its base, a custom of higher social classes of the time.



Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617)

Consequences of Drinking: The Young Drinker
c.1595-1600

Engraving

This richly decorated engraving by Goltzius almost reeks of alcohol. Just like the monk in the Egbert van Heemskerck painting, the man cannot keep away from the pleasures of drinking, even using two glasses at once! Too absorbed in the moment he ignores the scattered objects at his feet, which serve as symbols of warning against overconsumption. For example, the ripped purse and the hourglass signify that time and money are being wasted. His foot on the book, possibly the Bible, hints at a disregard for moral values in favour of pursuing worldly pleasures.



Cornelis Dusart (1660-1704)

A Monk and a Woman Enjoying Fish and Alcohol
c.1675-1704

Mezzotint

A drinking monk, a seemingly contradictory image. This type of moralistic caricature was popular in the sixteenth century during the Protestant Reformation as propaganda against the Catholic faith. While the monk in Van Heemskerck's painting is only sipping a glass of wine, Dusart's print depicts a more exaggerated mocking scene. He indulges in almost every sin possible: excessive eating, drinking, and even engaging in sexual pleasures, as the celibacy of the Catholic clergy was a target of great criticism at the time. This print belongs to a series of six satirical prints of monks enjoying themselves with women.

Insects



Pieter van den Bosch (1612-1663) Bunch of Grapes Hung in Niche c.1600-1625 Oil on canvas

A bunch of grapes hanging in a niche, with a beautiful ribbon and some insects flying around. The captivating trompe-l'oeil effect is achieved by using contrast and shadows that create volume and depth of field. This seemingly simple still life is filled with Christian iconography. While the grapes are the symbol of eucharistic wine and hence of the blood of Christ, the colour blue on the ribbon may allude to holiness, purity, or the Virgin Mary. Even the insects hold meaning, with the cabbage white butterfly referring to the resurrected soul.



Henri Toutin (1614-1683) Blackwork Ornaments: Insects and Birds Surrounding a Triangular Ornament c.1628 Engraving

This small and refined engraving was made by a teenager, the fourteen-year-old Henri Toutin as a design for goldsmith work. The image shows a central blackwork ornament surrounded by birds and bats on the lower half, with the upper half featuring a locust (left) and a mayfly (right). Both the locust and the mayfly were possibly inspired by an engraving of Albrecht Dürer with the Holy Family and a dragonfly, used as a religious symbol. While in the Middle Ages insects were depicted for their symbolic meanings, here they are meant as pure decoration. Toutin cut them into a copperplate to train his eyes and engraving skills.



Nicolaes de Bruyn (1571-1656) Insects and Mythical Creature c.1594 Engraving

A curious example of the nature studies popular in the seventeenth century, of which the Flemish engraver Nicolaes de Bruyn was very fond. This image shows a mythical creature alongside various biological observations of real insects including locusts, a dragonfly, and a mayfly, as well as a predominant and highly detailed fly in the lower right-hand corner. Although they perhaps go unnoticed at first glance, three of these insects are also present in Pieter van den Bosch's painting of a bunch of grapes. De Bruyn's engraving belongs to a series of twelve prints with insects and birds.



Cornelis Bisschop (1630-1674)

Child Feeding a Cat

c.1660-1669

Oil on panel

In this tender painting of a child spoon-feeding a cat, the warm tones and high-contrast lighting are predominant, as Bisschop was influenced by Rembrandt and his contemporaries' use of colour and light. Both the child and the cat eat their meal, perhaps a porridge, in a messy way that brings playfulness and humour. The child's innocent mischief, as well as the gentle friendship between the two characters, are the highlight of this domestic genre scene.



Cornelis Visscher (c.1628-1658)

The Large Cat
c.1657

Engraving

A tabby cat very similar to the one depicted by Cornelis Bisschop sits near a plant, probably some sort of soporific valerian which is making him sleepy. Unnoticed by the cat, a small mouse grabs the opportunity to step out of his hole. This engraving by Cornelis Visscher could be an illustration of the Dutch proverb "als de kat van huis is, dansen de muizen" (while the cat's away, the mice will play) or perhaps a warning against laziness by referring to Proverb 19:15 (Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger).



Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606-1669) The Virgin and Child with the Cat and Snake 1654 Etching

This intimate domestic scene represents the Holy Family, with Mary embracing her child while Joseph looks at them through the window. On the left, a cat seems to be chasing away a snake (as a symbol of evil) that crawls out of Mary's skirt. With this depiction, Rembrandt might be alluding to a metaphor in which the cat chasing the mouse resembles Jesus Christ thwarting evil. The fluidity and movement captured in this engraving's lines are a remarkable example of Rembrandt's skills in handling the etching needle.

All-conquering Death and Father Time



Hendrick Aerts (1565-1603)

Allegory of Death

1602

Oil on canvas

An imaginary Renaissance palace filled with multiple symbolic scenes and elements, all connecting to death. In the bottom left corner, a melancholic old man is pestered by the personification of Death holding a coffin: his time has come. Meanwhile, another old man follows Death, and to their right, a man carries his own coffin followed by the personification of Suicide. On the higher floors of the building, younger people enjoy different stages of life. The obelisk in the middle of the stairs may be a symbol of the Christian Church, a link between earthly existence and the afterlife.



Boëtius Adamsz Bolswert (c.1580-1633) after David Vinckboons (1576-c.1632) All-conquering Death, Who Pierces All Mankind with Arrows 1610 Engraving

No souls left behind! Death comes for everyone without discrimination in one way or another. In this allegorical battle scene, people of all kinds (and animals) are depicted trying to fight Death's arrows in vain: not even a king is spared. Behind Death, Father Time destroys symbols of knowledge, and a winged Fame looks the other way playing her trumpets. On the upper right side, Minerva and Hercules observe from the top of a gate while holding a ripped banner, perhaps alluding to how even the most famous of heroes could be forgotten after everyone is gone.



(1)



(2)

Crispijn de Passe the Elder (1564-1637) after Maerten de Vos (1532-1603)

- (1) Father Time and the Personification of Diligence and Labour
- (2) FatherTime and the Personification of Negligence and Slackness
 c.1589-1611
 Engraving

These two prints stem from a series of four engravings entitled *The Use and Abuse of Time*. Whether one can enjoy a successful life or suffer a troublesome existence is determined by their actions. This duality is depicted by De Passe through the personifications of Diligence and Labour (left) and Negligence and Slackness (right): two ladies with very different priorities in life but judged equally by Father Time. This view on labour and wealth as virtue is a secular perspective from the sixteenth century, very different from the Middle Ages' Christian views on work as punishment from God.

Bacchus and Ariadne



Pieter Potter (1597-1652)

Bacchus Comforts Ariadne on Naxos
c.1630-1640

Oil on panel

In this quiet and intimate mythological painting, Potter depicts the first encounter of Bacchus (Dionysus) and Ariadne. After ignoring her father's wishes and helping Theseus defeat the Minotaur in the labyrinth at Knossos, the Cretan princess was abandoned by Theseus on the island of Naxos. Bacchus, the god of wine and fertility, finds her brokenhearted by Theseus' betrayal and decides to console her. This will lead to their eventual romance and marriage. The crown behind Ariadne is one of the main attributes that help identify this scene.



Cornelis Cort (1533-1578) after Frans Floris (1519-1570)

The Seven Liberal Arts: Astronomy or Astrology

c.1578

Engraving

Astronomy and astrology were part of the Liberal Arts curriculum for scholars in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. Classic mythology was an influence on the discipline, being the inspiration for the names and stories of many planets and stars. The crown of the Cretan princess Ariadne is said to be the origin of the Corona Borealis constellation, which can be found next to Hercules on the celestial globe depicted in Cort's engraving. The same crown is a known attribute of Ariadne, as it can be seen in Pieter Potter's painting *Bacchus comforts Ariadne on Naxos*.



Jacob Matham (1571-1631) after David Vinckboons I (1576-1633) Bacchus and Ariadne as Lovers c.1616 Engraving

This print was made for the poem *Hymnus oft Lof-sanck van Bacchus* (1616) after a design by David Vinckboons. Per Ovid's Metamorphoses, the Greek God Bacchus found and married Ariadne after she was abandoned by Theseus on Naxos. Pieter Potter's painting shows their first encounter, and Matham's print the consummation of their love. The story is a reflection of betrayal and abandonment, with perhaps a hopeful ending. This myth is also the origin story of the Corona Borealis constellation, formed when Ariadne's crown was thrown to the sky (in the upper left) after her wedding to Bacchus.

Family Harmony



Frans Sant-Acker (1648-1688)

Music-making Company

c.1670-1679

Oil on panel

Four people pose in an elegant room with a lute, a violin, and a viola da gamba. The couple on the left are tuning their instruments, a symbol of amity and harmony within a marriage. The black dress worn by the woman on the right side indicates that she's a widow, and the dog on her lap holds the meaning of loyalty towards her late husband. The mythological painting behind her depicts Venus mourning the death of her lover Adonis, another layer of symbolism in this beautiful family portrait.



Pieter de Jode I (1570-1634) after Adam van Noort (c.1561-1641)

Musical Company at Night

c.1590-1634

Engraving

A beautiful melody is only produced when all the instruments are in sync with each other. In the same manner, unity, peace, and harmony within the household are represented in this print of a wealthy family gathered to play music. The father plays the lute, the mother the virginal, and the child holds a songbook. Two young men in the background complete the scene. One of them holds a torch, illuminating the rather dark room and creating an intimate atmosphere represented by the artist with *chiaroscuro*. The torch can be associated with peace, contributing to the image of harmony.



Crispijn de Passe (c.1564-1637) after Maerten de Vos (c.1532-1603)

Discordia, or The Bad Household

1589

Engraving

In this heated and chaotic fight scene between family members, there is a curious link to Frans Sant-Acker's painting *Music-making Company*. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the meaning of a dog was common knowledge to artists and viewers alike: loyalty. While in the painting the dog is peacefully sitting on a widow's lap to represent loyalty to her late husband, in Maerten de Vos' engraving the dog is biting the skirt of the mother to signify unfaithfulness inside the marriage. She even uses her keys, an attribute of a good housewife, to fight her husband.

The Satyr and the Peasant



Jan Steen (1625-1679)

Satyr and the Farmer

c.1660-1663

Oil on canvas

The famous Aesop fable "The Satyr and the Peasant" was a topic chosen on multiple occasions for his paintings by Jan Steen. The moral lesson against being ambiguous and two-faced (being able to blow hot and cold air as the peasant in the centre of the scene does), made this tale popular in the seventeenth century. Steen masterfully brings dynamism to the scene by having all characters engage with each other, while the Satyr addresses the viewer directly with a knowing expression before he flees back into the forest.



Lucas Vorsterman (1595-1675) after Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678) The Satyr and the Peasant c.1621 Engraving

"I can't be friends with a man that blows hot and cold in the same breath" says the Satyr to the Peasant when he blows on his soup to cool it down. This amusing scene from an Aesop fable was popular with seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish artists, and it's depicted with great detail in this print by Lucas Vorsterman. Moralistic messages were a common topic, and in both this engraving and Jan Steen's painting with the same title the trustworthiness of someone who speaks multiple truths (or blows hot and cold air) is questioned by the Satyr.



Werner van den Valckert (1580-1627) Sleeping Venus and Cupid Spied by Satyrs c.1610-1612 Etching

While in Vorsterman's engraving and Steen's painting the Satyr comes with a moralistic message, here he is depicted in a negative role. A sleeping and unaware Venus, accompanied by Cupid, is being spied upon by two satyrs. They lustfully creep on Venus, showing how they are deceitful creatures that struggle with self-control. This type of satyr became more common in prints and paintings from the early Renaissance. Alternatively, this scene has also been interpreted as Jupiter and Antiope's myth, in which the god Jupiter disguised as a satyr forced himself onto the nymph.

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