

From the Library:

The Book Illustrations of Romeyn de Hooghe

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DE YSTROOM

Remyn de Hoer
1832

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Romeyn de Hooghe (1645 – 1708) has been called one of the greatest artists to come out of the late Dutch Golden Age. He was certainly one of the most prolific, producing over 3,500 prints. Yet we know little about his life and scholars have only recently begun to give him much attention. Born in 1645 in Amsterdam to a button maker and his wife in apparently comfortable circumstances, de Hooghe came of age just as the European baroque was beginning to wind down. He was active from roughly 1670 to 1715 — the early part of a period sometimes referred to pejoratively as the *Pruikentijd* (periwig era) when the Dutch Republic fell into decline. Dutch artists of the late seventeenth century have often been viewed as standing on the shoulders of masters like Rembrandt van Rijn (1609 – 1669), Johannes Vermeer (1632 – 1675), and Frans Hals (c. 1582/1583 – 1666) rather than continuing to innovate. Some scholars, however, now see this period as important to understanding both the transition from the baroque artistic style to the French rococo, which became dominant in the eighteenth century, and the broader cultural emergence of Enlightenment ideals. Romeyn de Hooghe in many ways embodies both of these shifts and can help us to understand the Dutch influence on these developments. Rather than being simply derivative, de Hooghe was incredibly learned and created his own visual language based on his study of allegory, religion, and classical texts. He is also considered to be an important figure in the development of modern political satire, because he crafted overtly propagandistic imagery in ways that had not been seen before.

During his lifetime de Hooghe was noted for his paintings, sculpture, coins, and decorative arts, as well as for his status as a scholar, author, publisher, art dealer, and lawyer. However, because many of his works do not survive, it is primarily as an etcher and book illustrator that we know him today. Where and with whom he trained remains a mystery, but he was certainly influenced by Rembrandt, Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577 – 1640), and other important Golden Age artists. In turn de Hooghe influenced a great number of printmakers and illustrators of the early eighteenth century, including Adriaan Schoonebeek (c. 1658 – 1714) and Frans Decker (1684 – 1751). He trained many of the next generation himself, first in his Amsterdam studio and later at the popular drawing school he opened in Haarlem. Throughout his career de Hooghe provided illustrations for scholarly

Frontispiece etching for “De Ystroom” in Johannes Antonides van der Goes, *Gedichten*, Amsterdam, 1685, David K. E. Bruce Fund.

works like emblem books and literature, works of piety, history, and cartography, and even festival books and political satire and commentary, some of which he also authored. His style of illustration is characterized by loose, sketchy lines (sometimes described as poorly drawn), strong contrasts of light and shadow, and the creation of depth and space within his plates by using either progressive etches or differently sized needles to divide them into fore, middle, and background. His earliest known works are a series of etchings after Nicolaes Berchem (1620 – 1683) dated 1662, but it was in 1667 that he first began doing commissioned work.

De Hooghe rose to prominence in the 1670s, helped in no small part by the patronage of William III, Prince of Orange-Nassau. Following a long period in which the Dutch Republic functioned without a *stadholder*, William rose to that position in 1672 when a military leader was needed to repel an invasion by the French army under Louis XIV. William's success in this campaign gave him a great deal of power within the Dutch Republic, but also set him up as the defender of Protestant Europe against Louis XIV and other catholic monarchies throughout the continent, something de Hooghe promoted with his propagandistic prints. It is likely that despite his influence and political connections, however, politics also played a role in de Hooghe's descent into obscurity, until scholars in the late-nineteenth century revived interest in his work. His entanglement in the pamphlet war of 1690 sullied his reputation, and early biographers such as Jacobus Houbraken (1698 – 1780) published the libelous attacks against de Hooghe found in these pamphlets as fact. This, combined with a general attitude toward late seventeenth-century Dutch art as being of lesser quality than the work of earlier masters, caused one of the greatest artists of the late Dutch Golden Age to be forgotten for nearly two hundred years. This exhibition aims to shed light on de Hooghe's work by providing a survey of his book illustrations.

All etchings are designed and executed by Romeyn de Hooghe unless otherwise noted. All books are from the National Gallery of Art Library.



1 *Intrede van zyn Majesteit door de Zeegeboog voor t' Hof*, etching in Govard Bidloo, *Komste van Zyne Majesteit Willem III. Koning van Groot Britanje, enz. in Holland*, The Hague, 1691, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Domestic politics in seventeenth-century Holland were mainly defined by the dichotomy between republicans, who favored provincial sovereignty, and Orangists, who supported the House of Orange-Nassau as a de facto monarchy through the office of *stadtholder*. De Hooghe was in the latter camp, and in 1672 he supported the movement to put William III (1650–1702), Prince of Orange, in that office. Fifteen years later, when William embarked on a plan to replace James II as king of England, de Hooghe was instrumental in the propaganda campaign that helped to secure the support of the Dutch public and to raise an invasion army. Following his successful Glorious Revolution in 1688, William was installed as king by the English parliament the following year, an event commemorated by de Hooghe. When William returned to the Netherlands in 1691, he was greeted in The Hague with a spectacular triumphal entry, and de Hooghe was tapped to design structures for the event including several arches adorned with paintings depicting William's military successes and political accomplishments. De Hooghe also executed a series of etchings that were published in the account of the event written by Govard Bidloo (1649–1713) shown here.

2 *Ignum nocturna hilaria*, etching in *Divo et invictissimo Leopoldo I. P. F. A. fidei in Hungaria assertori, rebellium dormitori, Turcarum debellatori ob Budam septimò inexpugnabilem armis victricibus occupatam, ignes triumphales Bruxellis extractos dedicant consecrant[que] fama et Gloria*, c. 1686, Nell and Robert Weidenhammer Fund (front cover)

De Hooghe produced illustrations of important affairs outside the Netherlands as well. Though less historically accurate the further an event was from home, the artist was adept at capturing the spirit of the occasion in a way that would clearly communicate it to his local audience. This is a series of nine large prints depicting the festivities in



Brussels celebrating Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor (1640–1705), and his capture of the city of Buda, Hungary from the Turks in 1686. Shown here is one of two illustrations of the massive fireworks display executed for the event.

3 Jacob Peeters after Romeyn de Hooghe, *Triumfante intree van S. K. M. in Tent des Grooten Vizir*, etching, Antwerp, c. 1692, David K. E. Bruce Fund

De Hooghe executed a series of etchings recording the Battle of Vienna in September 1683 that were published in Brussels the following year in an account by Johann van Ghelen (1645–1721) called *Relation succincte et véritable de tout ce qui s'est passé pendant le siège de Vienne*. . . . Later these prints were copied by the Antwerp engraver and printer Jacob Peeters (1637–1695) and published in the volume shown here, which is composed of seven print series. After two years under siege by Ottoman forces, Vienna was finally relieved by the combined forces of the Holy Roman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in a battle marking the beginning of the political hegemony of the Hapsburg dynasty in central Europe and the stagnation of Ottoman influence in the region. Here Leopold I makes his triumphant entry into the tent of Grand Vizier Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha at battle's end.

4 Frontispiece etching in Frans van Hoogstraten, *Het Voorhof der Ziele*, Rotterdam, 1698, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Emblem books were an important literary genre in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. Combining verse and image, these works often focused on conduct, and provided moral or religious instruction. One of de Hooghe's earliest commissions was to illustrate *The Temple of the Soul* by Frans van Hoogstraten (1632–1696), originally published in 1668 with sixty etchings integrated with the text. De Hooghe maintained a fruitful partnership with Hoogstraten throughout his career, but apparently this book was not a bestseller. Thirty years later, another printer issued this “second edition” using the leftover copies and replacing only the title page; de Hooghe's allegorical frontispiece shown here, the preface, and the final page of text all still bear the 1668 publication date.



5 *Von dem Himmel, und der Erde*, etching in Romeyn de Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica, oder Denkbilder der alten Völker, namentlich der Aegyptier, Chaldäer, Phönizier, Juden, Griechen, Römer . . .*, Amsterdam, 1744, J. Paul Getty Fund in honor of Franklin Murphy (back cover)

In the seventeenth century, Egyptian hieroglyphs were assumed to be emblematic images, and scholars interpreted them as they would their own literature. De Hooghe produced both the text and illustrations for this study of the iconography of the ancients and expanded it to include classical mythology and religions from around the world, even satirizing Catholic symbols. First published decades after his death in a Dutch edition of 1735, and later in this German edition of 1744, this work illuminates the artist's seemingly uncanny ability to reduce the content of entire tomes to a single allegorical image. This skill is exemplified by his numerous decorative frontispieces, an oeuvre which includes all manner of books — history, religion, literature, politics, and even cartography — and reveals an erudite mind and vast knowledge of various subjects.

6 Frontispiece etching for “De Ystroom” in Johannes Antonides van der Goes, *Gedichten*, Amsterdam, 1685, David K. E. Bruce Fund

In 1685 de Hooghe was commissioned to design illustrations for this edition of the collected works of Johannes Antonides van der Goes (1647–1684), one of the greatest poets of the late seventeenth century, who died of tuberculosis at only thirty-seven years old. De Hooghe took special care with one poem in particular, the author’s most famous work. “De Ystroom” describes a walk along the canals in Amsterdam, glorifying the city’s technological and cultural advances. Etchings appear at the beginning of each of the four parts of the poem, and there is also a frontispiece for the entire work, shown here. Rather than depicting actual locations in Amsterdam, as described in the poem, de Hooghe uses the motif of a river god as an allegory for the mastery of water that helped the Dutch Republic become a global economic and military power in the seventeenth century, and that helped Amsterdam in particular to become the most important port in northern Europe.

7 *Two Figures Wrestling*, etching in Nicolaes Petter, *Klare Onderrichtinge der Voortreffelijcke Worstel-konst, Verhandelende hoemen in alle voorvallen van Twist in Handtgemeenschap, sich kan hōeden*, Amsterdam, 1674, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Nicolaes Petter (1624–1672) was the self-defense teacher at a school for young gentlemen in Amsterdam. De Hooghe visited the school and produced a series of drawings of men in various wrestling poses. The drawings were subsequently turned into etchings and combined with written descriptions of the techniques to form one of the most important European treatises on unarmed combat ever produced. The title page credits Petter with inventing the techniques, but the author of the text is unknown. The illustrations are divided into thirteen sections, each with between two and twelve plates, depicting the combatants in various fighting scenarios and set in different landscapes and costumes.



8 Unknown artist after Romeyn de Hooghe, etching in Chertablon, *Maniere de se bien preparer a la mort par des considerations sur la cene, la passion, & la mort de Jesus-Christ*, Antwerp, 1700, David K. E. Bruce Fund

In the tradition of *ars moriendi* that began in the sixteenth century, this book shows the path to a good death through a series of meditations on the Last Supper, the Passion, and the death of Christ. Each print depicts a man contemplating a religious image accompanied by an appropriate verse of scripture and textual commentary. Though de Hooghe was a Protestant, this work is aimed at a Catholic audience and demonstrates his willingness to take commissions regardless of his own political or religious beliefs. These forty-two engravings were first done for David de la Vigne's *Miroir de la Bonne Mort* published in Antwerp in 1673. The artist was still working in 1700, but because the plates in this work are unsigned and several are reversed from the earlier versions or have other minor differences, they were likely copied by another artist.



9 Etching in Antonius van Dale, *De oraculis veterum ethnicorum dissertationes duae*, Amsterdam, 1700, David K. E. Bruce Fund

The first edition of this treatise on pagan oracles by Antonius van Dale (1638–1708) was published in 1683 in Latin with only a frontispiece and a single folding plate by de Hooghe. When a Dutch translation was issued in 1687, however, six additional folding plates designed by de Hooghe were added. The much expanded second Latin edition shown here includes these additional plates along with one more by a different artist. With such limited illustration for so dense a theological text, de Hooghe uses the foreground, middle ground, and background to create a narrative space where multiple scenes within one plate show how learning and wisdom can overcome the deceptions of hypocrisy and ambition and lead to happiness.

10 Romeyn de Hooghe after J. G. Rudolphi, *Desenberg prope Warburgum*, etching in Ferdinand von Fürstenberg, *Monumenta paderbornensia, ex historia romana, francica, saxonica eruta, et novis inscriptionibus, figuris, tabulis geographicis & notis illustrate*, Amsterdam, 1672, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Early in his career de Hooghe provided illustrations for this history of the Prince-Bishopric of Paderborn (a semi-autonomous Catholic region in what is today the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia) by Ferdinand von Fürstenberg (1626–1683), who was the bishop there from 1661 until his death. Unlike the majority of his work, de Hooghe did not design the illustrations himself, but instead made etchings after drawings by another artist, J. G. Rudolphi (dates unknown). The first edition of 1669 contains only five etchings, of which two are maps, but the second edition was expanded with eighteen additional illustrations, including the view of the castle ruins of Desenberg on the outskirts of the town of Warburg shown here.

11 *View of Dordrecht*, etching in Matthys Balen, *Beschryvinge der stad Dordrecht*, Dordrecht, 1677, David K. E. Bruce Fund

With the end of the Eighty Years War in 1648, the Dutch Republic finally gained official recognition as an independent state, and a Spanish embargo was lifted that allowed Dutch trade to flourish. As the republic became an economic power in Europe, a sense of civic pride and a renewed interest in Dutch history was kindled in its citizenry. Provinces united in common struggle now fostered rivalries, and the production of elaborate provincial and city guides and histories became popular in the latter half of the seventeenth century. After his death, de Hooghe's etchings were used to illustrate an edition of Schirvelius's description of Haarlem, but the description of Dordrecht by Matthys Balen (1611–1691) shown here is the only city guide that de Hooghe was specifically commissioned to illustrate.



12 Romeyn de Hooghe after Juan de Ledesma, *Expugnacion de Grave*, etching in Famiano Strada, *IHS Segunda decada de las guerras de Flandes, desde el principio del gobierno Alexandro Farnese...*, Cologne, 1682, A.W. Mellon Foundation New Century Fund

This is the revised second edition of Famiano Strada's (1572–1649) account of the Dutch war of independence from the Catholic rule of the Hapsburgs. Originally published in Latin, it focuses only on the first three decades of the Eighty Years War, from 1555 to 1588, including the lead-up to the Dutch revolt of 1568 and the reconquering of much of the southern Netherlands (present day Belgium, Luxembourg, and Northern France) by Spanish forces in a campaign beginning in 1579 under the command of Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma (1545–1592). Shown here is a plate in volume two depicting several scenes from the 1586 siege and capture of the town of Grave in northern Brabant.



13 Etching in Emanuel van der Hoeven, *Hollands aeloude vryheid, buyten het stadhouderschap*, Amsterdam, 1706, David K. E. Bruce Fund

In contrast to the illustrations for Strada's Spanish account, later in his career de Hooghe illustrated a Dutch-centric history by Emanuel van der Hoeven (1660–1727) called *Holland's Ancient Freedom, without the Stadtholdership*. De Hooghe uses allegorical imagery to describe important episodes in Dutch history. In this plate the Spanish are shown terrorizing the Dutch people. The caption reads, "Suffer Holland, South or North, on the Spanish executioner's platform. Her thirst for blood will make you large, and your club will be able to subdue the specter."

Celebrating Dutch republicanism, the book appeared after the death of William III and the abolishment of the hereditary position of *stadtholder* and is clearly anti-Orangist. The final plate bears the caption, "See Holland free and bravely avenging valiant West Friesland, by Nassau first healed, by Nassau nearly broken." The same year de Hooghe published his own politico-historical work entitled *Mirror of the State of the United Netherlands*, which is more praiseworthy of the leadership of the House of Orange-Nassau during the wars of the late seventeenth century, but still lauds the Dutch people for putting economic interests of the nation above the ambitions of dynastic leaders.

14 Etching in Abraham de Wicquefort, *Advis fidelle aux veritables Hollandois*, The Hague, 1673, David K. E. Bruce Fund

De Hooghe first became known for his political prints in the early 1670s, when Louis XIV invaded the Dutch Republic. First to appear were his illustrations for Abraham de Wicquefort's (1606–1682) work on the atrocities inflicted by the French army on the civilian populations of Bodegraven, Nichtevecht, and Zwammerdam. The narrative folding plates use harsh contrasts of light and shade to depict epic and brutal scenes of destruction and torture. Notably, the text is in French and probably hoped to find sympathy for the Dutch in the southern provinces and possibly even spark outrage amongst the French citizenry.

15 Romeyn de Hooghe, *Schouburgh der nederlandse veranderingen*, Amsterdam, 1674, David K. E. Bruce Fund

A year after de Wicquefort's book appeared, de Hooghe wrote, illustrated, and financed his own account of the invasion and the events that followed it. In contrast to the starkly documentary earlier account, this book seeks to attack the French through propaganda and satire. The work uses an allegorical framework, the plate shown here portraying the French army as a medusa astride Cerberus, the three-headed hound that guards the gates of Hades. The accompanying text mentions Bodegraven and Zwammerdam specifically, and the hound's collar bears a Latin inscription that translates to "The Destruction of Carthage," alluding to the Romans' lack of mercy at the end of the Punic Wars. Though still employing graphic imagery, this interpretive approach represents a previously unknown way of presenting a historical account, and tellingly, it is printed in Dutch and thus aimed at a local audience already sympathetic to the author's point of view. This not only foretells de Hooghe's later anti-Franco political orientation, but also his keen business acumen as this approach ensured a profitable return on his investment.



16 Romeyn de Hooghe, *Nieuw liedt, van de drie-dubbelde Kruysvaert van de Ridders en Grooten uyt uythangborden gesprooten*, c. 1690, David K. E. Bruce Fund

During the 1680s, de Hooghe employed his gift for satire in attacks on both Louis XIV and James II in the lead-up to William III's invasion of England, and in 1689–1690 his searing commentary was turned to domestic issues. Working as an agent of William, de Hooghe became embroiled in a dispute with the leaders of Amsterdam, who favored trade with France and felt that William was sacrificing Dutch



interests for those of his new constituency in England. The debate was conducted in a series of essays and prints, several of which are gathered in this volume, published and distributed in secret by both sides and full of slanderous personal attacks and biting rebukes. De Hooghe, ever the loyal Orangist, attacked the burgher aristocracy with satires like the broadside shown here, labeled *New Song, of the triple crusade of the knights and notables, sprouted from shop signs*. Portraying them as gluttonous and simple-minded, de Hooghe suggests that the regents should support William if they want to remain an independent state rather than become thralls of Louis XIV. Unfortunately for de Hooghe, the return attacks labeled him a thief and forger (among even more unsavory charges), and though he successfully defended himself in court and his commissions appear to have been unaffected, this character assassination was revived after his death.

17 Romeyn de Hooghe, *Esopus in Europa*, Amsterdam, c. 1701, David K. E. Bruce Fund

This series of political pamphlets was issued weekly from 1701 to 1702 as the political situation in Europe escalated toward the War of Spanish Succession. Using his knowledge of mythology and history, de Hooghe casts various European nations and leaders in the roles of animals like those from Aesop's fables as well as other ancient, mythological, and literary figures. Here the "cuckoo birds under the crown" run amok destroying one another.

Further Reading

Henk van Nierop, et. al. *Romeyn de Hooghe: de verbeelding van de late Gouden Eeuw*. Zwolle: Waanders Uitgeverij, 2008.

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Meredith Hale. "Romeyn de Hooghe and the Birth of Political Satire." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2006. ProQuest.

William Harry Wilson. "The Art of Romeyn de Hooghe: An Atlas of European Late Baroque Culture." PhD diss., Harvard University, 1974. ProQuest.

Chris Coppens. *Een Ars moriendi met etsen van Romeyn de Hooghe: verhaal van een boekillustratie*. Brussels: AWLSK, 1995.

Etching in Abraham de Wicquefort, *Advis fidelle aux veritables Hollandois*, The Hague, 1673, David K. E. Bruce Fund.



Checklist of the exhibition *From the Library: The Book Illustrations of Romeyn de Hooghe*, September 13, 2014 – January 25, 2015.

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Written by Yuri Long.

The Gallery website features highlights from the exhibition and links to exhibition related activities at www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/exhibitions/2014/romeyn-de-hooghe.html.

