



17. *Circumcision of Christ*, by Peter Paul Rubens. 1604–05. Oil on canvas applied to oak panel, 105 by 73.5 cm. (Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna; exh. Palazzo Ducale, Genoa).

recent discovery has solved the puzzle of the commission's missing modello that had been a matter of debate in recent decades.

The rediscovered modello was once owned by Pietro Maria Gentile (1589/90–1662); he was Nicolò's son-in-law and was later probably to own two extraordinary large-scale figure paintings, *Deianira contemplating the shirt of Nessus* and *Hercules in the garden of Hesperides* (both c.1635–38; Musei Reali, Galleria Sabauda, Turin; no.51–52); not necessarily completed as a pair by Rubens's death, the very roughly executed and overpowering *Hercules* is superior. The pair was sold out of Genoa only in the early 1950s, and thus their loan from Turin is a matter of some satisfaction for Genoese *campanilismo*, as indeed must be this exhibition as a whole.

1 Reviewed by Arnauld Brejon de Lavergnée in this Magazine, 146 (2004), pp.427–29.

2 Catalogue: *Rubens a Genova*. Edited by Nils Büttner and Anna Orlando. 368 pp. incl. numerous col. + b. & w. ills. (Electa, Milan, 2022), €52. ISBN 978–88–928–2279–5.

3 See N. Büttner and S.-K. Diefenthaler, eds: exh. cat. *Becoming Famous: Peter Paul Rubens*, Stuttgart (Staatgalerie) 2021–22.

Fake News and Lying Pictures: Political Prints in the Dutch Republic

Krannert Art Museum, Champaign
25th August–17th December

by ARMIN KUNZ

In 1997 Christian Stölzl, the Director of the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, reminded readers of the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition *Krieg der Bilder* that propaganda images should not only be associated with the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century but were found in previous centuries.¹ Once again, we are living in a time characterised by an abundance of manipulated images, when facts are ridiculed as 'fake news' and growing swaths of the population are living in alternative infospheres dominated by tendentious 'news' outlets and conspiracy theorists. Disinformation has become a fixture of politics everywhere. This exhibition could therefore not be more timely.²

Organised by Maureen Warren, Curator of European and American Art at the Krannert Art Museum, *Fake News and Lying Pictures* brings together 101 prints dating from the 1570s to the early eighteenth century. They are presented in one of the museum's largest galleries, which has been divided into six sections by walls arranged in dynamic angles. Aimed to appeal to both antiquarian specialists and the general public, the exhibition is structured thematically, with topics ranging from 'Dutch Lions and Other Political Animals' and the 'Spoils of the Seas' to 'Men of Honor, Women of Virtue'. Only one section is devoted monographically to the 'Propaganda Master' Romeyn de Hooghe. Most of the assembled prints were published as broadsides that celebrated or criticised political events using both image and text. These were tumultuous times, the beginning of which was marked by the northern Low Countries' fight for independence from the Spanish crown during the Eighty Years' War, a conflict that ultimately continued in the Europe-wide Thirty Years' War. In the course of these events the newly established Dutch Republic developed into

Europe's most wealthy and scientifically advanced nation, with an expanding empire that stretched along the global trade routes, established, often through military force, by the Dutch East India and Dutch West India Companies, founded in 1602 and 1621 respectively.³ With France succeeding Spain as the strongest nation in Europe, the second half of the seventeenth century was dominated by efforts to keep French advances at bay, especially after the occupation of the Spanish Netherlands by the troops of Louis XIV in 1667–68.

The continuous military conflicts had important consequences for Dutch domestic politics. The Republic was ruled by a delicate balance between Regents and Stadtholders, two often opposing factions referred to as Republicans and Orangists. The former represented the patrician urban elite, in essence an oligarchy of merchants who elected the regents and was interested in peace as a basis for a flourishing market. The Orangists were named after the House of Orange-Nassau, whose member William the Silent had been the chief organiser of the Dutch Revolt. They continued to favour military solutions that, in turn, enabled them to stay in power. This complex history full of warring factions provided the fertile ground for the explosion of political imagery during the long Dutch seventeenth century, helped not least by the Republic's structure as a confederation of independent provinces that made effective censorship difficult to enforce.

Warren presents a highly thought-provoking exhibition that accomplishes the feat of convincingly reconstructing the often-overlooked visual culture of quotidian life with virtually no reference to the overfamiliar 'high art' of the Dutch Golden Age. Rembrandt's mysterious etching *The Phoenix; or, the statue overthrown*, in a superb impression lent by the Morgan Museum and Library, New York, and printed on golden-toned Japanese Gampi paper (cat. no.73; Fig.20) is one of the very few exceptions.⁴ Warren follows J.A. Emmens in interpreting the print as an allegory celebrating William III (she admits that, visually, this is not very convincing given the puny size of the phoenix). The

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18. *The fair Constance dragooned by Harlequin Déodat*, by Romeyn de Hooghe. c.1689. Etching, engraving and letterpress, 54.2 by 42 cm. (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Krannert Art Museum, Champaign).

19. *Sailing cars*, by Willem van Swanenburg after Jacques de Gheyn II. 1603. Hand-coloured engraving, 56 by 128 cm. (Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam; exh. Krannert Art Museum, Champaign).

mythical bird was used on coins as an Orangist symbol for the young prince. In this reading, the fallen statue would represent his controversial father, Stadtholder William II, who unsuccessfully attempted to break the power of the Regents by seizing the city of Amsterdam by force in 1650.

None of the other printmakers included in the exhibition is a household name, with the possible exception of Romeyn de Hooghe. During the Glorious Revolution in the late 1680s, when the Dutch Stadtholder William of Orange deposed his uncle (and father-in-law) King James II of England, De Hooghe produced biting satires of Louis XIV. Meredith McNeill Hale contextualises these caricatures in her catalogue essay, reminding us that they were created at a time when it was still required of French courtiers to ‘treat the king’s portrait with the same ceremony and deference they afforded the king themselves [. .]

De Hooghe’s satires contributed to the deconstruction of this absolutist conception of kingship and, on a more practical level helped to shore up Dutch financial support for William III’s English and Irish campaigns, the success of which brought about a significant political-cultural shift away from absolutism’ (p.165). Accordingly, Hale suggests a re-evaluation of De Hooghe’s position, and here especially his creation of serialised images,



‘within the broader trajectory of political satire’ (p.148), a genre that would then see its full flourishing in the following century in Hogarth’s England (no.42; Fig.18).

The show brings together an abundance of rarely seen works with generous loans, most notably from the Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam, one of the most important repositories of Dutch historical prints. Only here could one find such a well-preserved

hand-coloured impression of Willem van Swanenburg’s engraving *Sailing cars* (no.82; Fig.19). In what is essentially a monumental newsprint, Swanenburg depicted a land yacht constructed by the court engineer Simon Stevin for Prince Maurice, who can be seen piloting it – turning the modern technological accomplishment into a ‘ship of state’ and at the same time ‘underscoring the political performativity of the occasion’ (p.52).



Made after a design by Jacques de Gheyn II in 1603, the print astonishes not only because of its unusual subject-matter and monumental size but also its surprisingly fine condition, with all the freshness of its elaborate colouring still intact. The print was clearly intended as a showpiece celebrating domestic ingenuity during turbulent times, even if, as Warren points out, ‘many Europeans knew the Chinese had invented such vessels and had been sailing them for centuries’ (p.50).

Another printmaker with a tendency to align himself with the dominant power was Claes Jansz Visscher. In the 1620s and 1630s he created what was effectively corporate propaganda for the Dutch West India Company by ‘favorably portraying the company’s exploits in Brazil’ (p.46). Yet he also supported the Orangist faction in the Oldenbarnevelt affair, the subject of Warren’s PhD thesis.⁵ Johan van Oldenbarnevelt was campaigning for a truce with Spain, bringing him into opposition with Prince Maurice of Orange, who, as a military commander, favoured a continuation of the war. This led to a media campaign to slander the politician, who was ultimately convicted for treason and beheaded on trumped-up charges of accepting Spanish bribes. Whereas Visscher commemorated the event in a multiplate-broadside (c.1628–29; Krannert Art Museum; no.89), the government banned images of the politician and his closest allies, not least to suppress the circulating doubts regarding the fairness of Oldenbarnevelt’s trial.

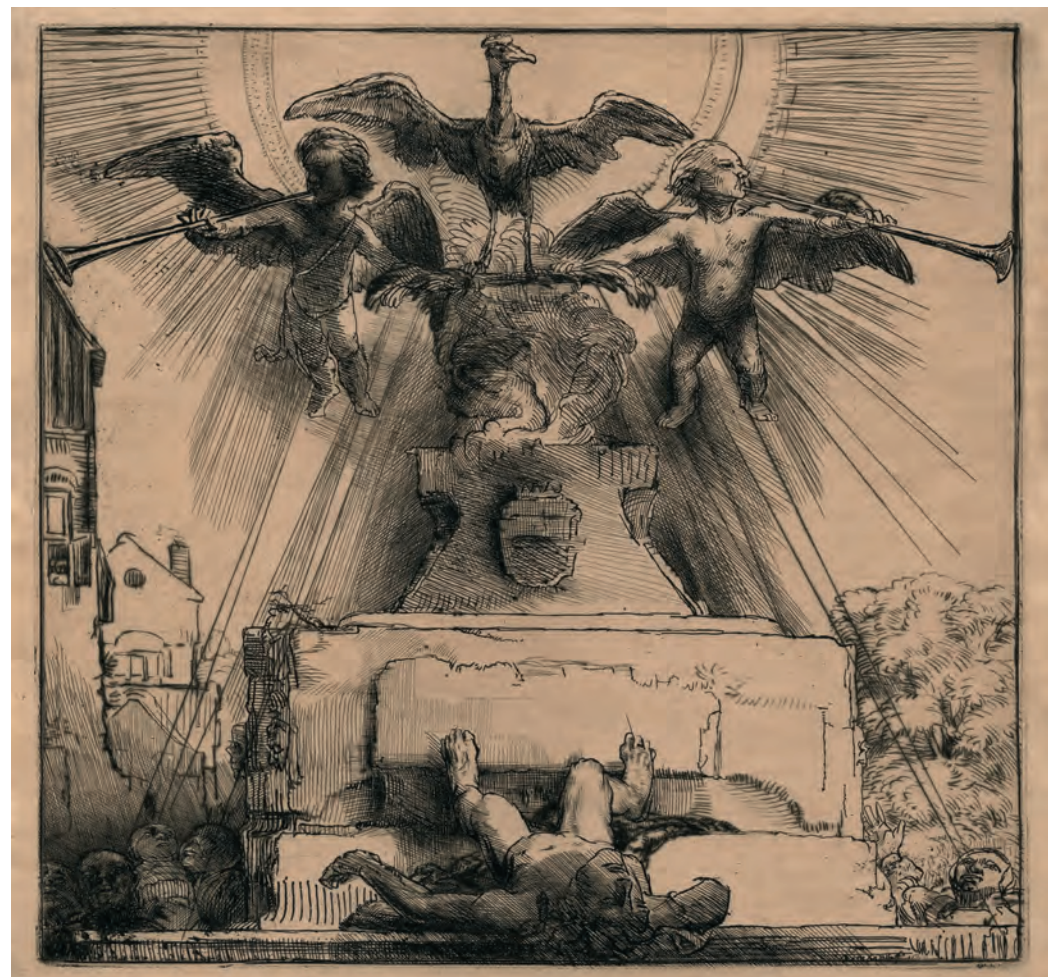
The subjects that remain notably absent are the defeats suffered by the Dutch over the course of their many conflicts, as well as the many cruelties perpetrated by the Dutch. Jacob van der Schley’s large engraving *Chinese houses burning during the 1740 Batavia Massacre* (after Adolf van der Laan) is a rare outlier here (1763; Atlas van Stolk; no.75). Instead of depicting military losses, artists created posthumous portraits of admirals who had lost their lives in battle. Represented by portraits of Cornelis Evertsen, Lieutenant Admiral of Zeeland, by Arnold de Jode (1658–67;

no.60) and Vice-Admiral Abraham van der Hulst, by Jan de Visscher (c.1660; no.99), these functioned, as Warren remarked to this reviewer, as ‘focus points of collective grief’.

The majority of prints in the exhibition were widely distributed, quickly discarded, displayed (framed or unframed) on walls, or, as in the case of Oldenbarnevelt, even confiscated and destroyed. Some survive only in unique impressions and a considerable number have probably been completely lost. It is therefore especially remarkable that Warren accomplished so much to enlarge the collection at the Krannert Museum in less than a decade. By taking advantage of the fact that works by lesser-known artists are often modestly priced, and of her intimate knowledge of specialist dealers, she was able to acquire some fifty prints for the museum, which can now claim to hold one of the largest and most significant collections of this material in the United States.⁶

20. *The Phoenix; or, the statue overthrown*, by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn. 1658. Etching and drypoint on Japanese paper, 17.9 by 18.3 cm. (Morgan Library and Museum, New York; exh. Krannert Art Museum, Champaign).

The catalogue includes a translation of Wolfgang P. Cillessen’s essay published in the Berlin catalogue, ‘Dutch pictorial propaganda in the medium of political correspondence in the second half of the seventeenth century’. There is also a concise overview of previous scholarship by the doyenne in this field, Ilja Veldman, ‘Dutch political prints: historiography in a nutshell’, as well as an essay by Daniel Horst, whose exhibition *Images of Discord: A Graphic Interpretation of the Opening Decades of the Eighty Years’ War*, organised jointly with James Tanis at Atlas van Stolk in 1993, was another important predecessor of the exhibition under review. In her catalogue essay, and even more explicitly in the show’s title and wall labels, Warren highlights the many parallels between then and now: info wars, manipulation, even memes can already be found among the political prints of the Dutch Republic. What else but a meme is the reprint of Pieter



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van der Heyden's engraving *Big fishes eat small ones*, based on a design by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Made in 1557, it shows a giant beached fish that is being gutted, with dozens of small fish pouring out of its mouth and body, a visualisation of the Dutch proverb that laments how powerful people always exploit those who are weaker and more vulnerable. In 1619, more than half a century after the creation of the plate, the publisher Hendrik Hondius added various captions to the image, which turn the gutted fish into the *Barneveltsche Monster*, once more a reference to the ill-fated Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (Atlas van Stolk; no.28).

By making multiple connections the exhibition brilliantly demonstrates the relevance of the historic material that present-day culture was increasingly expect historians to demonstrate – without ever falling into the trap of presentism. Warren's advantage is her subject-matter. Whereas museums that boast rich holdings of Dutch landscape, flower and genre paintings (as 'commercial' at the time of their creation as on today's art market) are struggling to bring new critical perspectives into their galleries, the prints displayed in the Krannert show were never anything but critical.

1 See Stölzl's foreword in W. Cillessen, ed.: exh. cat. *Krieg der Bilder: Druckgraphik als Medium politischer Auseinandersetzung im Europa des Absolutismus*, Berlin (Deutsches Historisches Museum) 1997–98, p.9.

2 Catalogue: *Paper Knives, Paper Crowns: Political Prints in the Dutch Republic*. Edited by Maureen Warren, with contributions by Wolfgang P. Cillessen, Meredith McNeill Hale, Daniel R. Horst and Ilja M. Veldman. 184 pp. incl. 89 col. ills. (Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2022), \$40. ISBN 978-1-64657-029-4. The exhibition will travel to the University Galleries, University of San Diego, and the Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA, in 2023.

3 For a thought-provoking overview of the anticolonial revisionism of Dutch history that also addresses the global implications of this heritage, see A. Ghosh: *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis*, Chicago 2021.

4 Papers made from the Japanese Gampi (or Ganpi) plants became available in Amsterdam during the 1640s. Since it was imported by the East India Company, early inventories and stock lists often tend to describe these impressions as 'printed on India paper'.

5 See M. Warren: *Politics, Punishment, and Prestige: Images of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt and the States Party in the Dutch Republic, 1618–1672*, unpublished PhD thesis (Northwestern University, Evanston, 2015).

6 For understandable reasons, only this impressive group of works owned by the Krannert will travel to the exhibition's two other venues.

Füssli: Entre rêve et fantastique

Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris
16th September 2022–
23rd January 2023

by DAVID H. SOLKIN

That France's public collections contain but one painting by Henry Fuseli, as well as just a handful of his drawings, provides the background for the decision by the Musée Jacquemart-André to stage the country's first exhibition of his work since 1975, and helps to explain its form. Although neither the works selected nor the catalogue contain much that will surprise the scholar, this was never the curators' intention.¹ Instead their aim has been to introduce French audiences to an artist they hardly know. One wonders what they will make of him.

The show is modest in scale, consisting of fifty-seven works, including a recently-discovered oil not in the catalogue (Fig.21), about evenly split between paintings and works on paper (mainly drawings), and covering Fuseli's main thematic interests – ancient history; Classical and Nordic mythology; Shakespeare, Milton and the Bible. There is also a section on

21. *Incubus escaping, leaving behind two women*, by Henry Fuseli. c.1785–94. Oil on canvas, 86.4 by 110.5 cm. (Private collection; exh. Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris).

women. A regrettable absentee is the prime version of *The Nightmare* (Detroit Institute of Arts), the image that has been virtually synonymous with Fuseli ever since it appeared at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 1782. (The present reviewer sees no reason to date *The Nightmare* to the previous year, as the authors of the Jacquemart-André catalogue and many others have done, presumably following Gert Schiff's incorrect statement that it was displayed at the Academy in 1781.)² By way of compensation, however, the organisers have borrowed the much smaller but very fine version of the composition from Vassar College (cat. no.45) – and, perhaps less wisely, a thinly-painted variant of 1810 (private collection; no.44) suffering from obvious condition issues that may or may not mask the quality of its execution.

Condition is a problem with many Fuseli oils, due in part to the technical inadequacies that were one consequence of his lack of formal training. But one suspects that sheer sloppiness was also to blame. For although the exhibition gives the overall impression that Fuseli's interest in a painting tended to wane

