

# Bosch's Legacy in Print

Daan van Heesch

Marisa Bass and Elizabeth Wyckoff, *Beyond Bosch: The Afterlife of a Renaissance Master in Print*, with an essay by Matthijs IJssink and a contribution by Peter Fuhring, exhibition catalogue, Saint Louis, MO, Saint Louis Art Museum, 17 April–19 July 2015; Cambridge, MA, Harvard Art Museums, 23 January–8 May 2016, Saint Louis Art Museum, 2015, 232 pp., 141 ill., \$45.

*Hieronymus Boschs Erbe*, edited by Tobias Pfeifer-Helke, exhibition catalogue, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 19 March–15 June 2015; Luxembourg, Villa Vauban – Musée d'Art de la Ville de Luxembourg, 25 February–28 May 2017, Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2015, 200 pp., 134 ill., €29.

The quincentenary of the death of Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450–1516) in 2016 spawned a plethora of

exhibitions in recent years, some of which emphasized the painter's legacy in print.<sup>1</sup> This choice of focus is not without reason: Bosch's rapid rise to international prominence was fuelled by and emerged alongside the new print medium – a medium, paradoxically, in which the painter probably never worked himself. Alart du Hameel (1449?–c. 1506), a master builder from 's-Hertogenbosch, was the first to make Bosch's visual language more widely available through intaglio printmaking. He issued three prints in the manner of his fellow townsman and marked them with both his own name and a reference to his hometown: 'bosche' (fig. ##1). Later beholders of Hameel's prints understandably mistook the city mark as a reference to the famed painter himself, although the designs, however 'Boschian' in appearance, were probably creative evocations rather than straightforward reproductions of Bosch's art.

1. Compare M. A. Bass, 'Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel

the Elder', *Print Quarterly*, xxxv, 2018, pp. 349–52.



1. Alart du Hameel, *The Besieged Elephant*, c. 1480–1506, engraving, 203 x 336 mm (London, British Museum).



2. Joannes and Lucas van Doetecum after Alart du Hameel, *The Besieged Elephant*, c. 1563, published by Hieronymus Cock, engraving, 402 x 538 mm (Brussels, KBR – Royal Library of Belgium).

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, new print technologies and the professionalization of the publishing business allowed the Bosch brand to spread with unprecedented speed and scale. By the seventeenth century, in fact, Boschian prints were found as far afield as Latin America.<sup>2</sup> This was largely due to Hieronymus Cock's Aux Quatre Vents press, the leading print-publishing house of Antwerp, which issued a dozen engravings from the late 1550s onwards on which Bosch is often dubiously credited as 'inventor'. As with Hameel, scholars traditionally identified Cock's prints as reproductions after lost originals by Bosch, but it is now generally agreed that these images are, by and large, remakes and imitations (among them new-fashioned

renditions of Hameel's prints, fig. ##2). Nevertheless, Cock's enterprise marked a true watershed in Bosch's expanding reception, and the majority of early modern viewers did, of course, take the label 'Hieronymus Bosch inventor' at face value.

The number of studies examining the nature and origin of Cock's Bosch prints has increased substantially in the last decade. New emphasis has also been placed on the impact of his Antwerp press on art entrepreneurship, local artistic discourse and print culture at large.<sup>3</sup> The exhibition catalogue *Beyond Bosch: The Afterlife of a Renaissance Master in Print* by Marisa Bass and Elizabeth Wyckoff successfully weaves together these diverse threads of research into a coherent whole.

2. D. van Heesch, 'Imagining Hieronymus Bosch in Colonial Peru: Foreign Sources, Indigenous Responses', *Simiolus*, xxxix, 2017, pp. 351–69.

3. See especially the seminal catalogue *Hieronymus Cock. The Renaissance in Print*, edited by J. Van Grieken, G. Luijten and J. Van der Stock, Brussels, 2013.



3. Pieter van der Heyden after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Big Fish Eat Little Fish*, 1557, engraving, 229 x 298 mm (Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen).

The book comprises three chapters and a catalogue made up almost exclusively of Bosch-inspired prints from a private collection with the addition of two strategic loans from the British Museum: Hameel's *Besieged Elephant* and *Last Judgement*.

In the first essay, focusing on Renaissance notions of invention, Bass argues that the act of designating Bosch the 'inventor' of designs produced by others must have been more than a mere marketing ploy. After all, Cock's contemporaries lived in a period that saw a renewed interest in the very concept of invention, and Bosch's earliest admirers conspicuously celebrated the master for his singular *ingenium* – his inexhaustible power to invent and create images in a completely new way. Wyckoff's chapter offers few new insights, but deftly

synthesizes the history of the Antwerp print market and Cock's place in it for the non-specialist reader. The author also uses the Boschian print phenomenon to address more general issues such as the collaborative nature of printmaking and the rise of encyclopedic print collections in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Matthijs IJlinsk's essay reconsiders the creation of *Big Fish Eat Little Fish* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525/30–69) and revisits the main arguments made in the author's published dissertation.<sup>4</sup> It is well known that Bruegel signed the 1556 drawing for the print with his own name, but when Cock pulled the original design into an engraving, the invention was credited to Bosch instead ('*Hieronymus · Bos · inuenteur*', fig. ##3). Earlier scholarship saw the remarkable omission

4. M. IJlinsk, *Bosch en Bruegel als Bosch: Kunst over kunst bij Pieter Bruegel*

(c. 1528–1569) en *Jheronimus Bosch (c. 1450–1516)*, Nijmegen, 2009.

of Bruegel's name as a mere commercial strategy, or worse, a falsification, but IJlinsk convincingly argues that the attribution to Bosch was instead part of a broader interest in artistic tradition and competitive *aemulatio*. *Big Fish Eat Little Fish* was a response to market demand, but it was also intended to trigger playful conversations on art and imitation. Hopefully, a full English translation of IJlinsk's thoughtful dissertation will become available in the not too distant future. The chapters are followed by 33 thorough catalogue entries, one of which is written by Peter Fuhring, who describes a rare, expanded edition of Joannes Galle's *Speculum diversarum imaginum speculativarum*, of 1638, at the Saint Louis Art Museum. This album with letterpress table of contents contains an extra group of 26 engravings, several of which take up Bosch-inspired subjects.

*Hieronymus Boschs Erbe*, edited by Tobias Pfeifer-Helke, accompanied a similar exhibition first installed in Dresden at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen. This richly illustrated book brings together a comparable corpus of prints, selected from the city's Kupferstich-Kabinett, with the addition of grotesque ornamental designs and a handful of works in other media from the Dresden

collections. The introductory essay by Pfeifer-Helke is followed by three chapters on a wide range of topics. The volume's most accomplished chapter, by Bertram Kaschek, reconsiders Bruegel's earliest known efforts in the Bosch aesthetic: *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, of 1556, *Patientia*, of 1557, and *The Seven Deadly Sins with the Last Judgement*, of 1558. The author's main argument is that these prints sought to engage not only in competitive emulation and art-historical discourse, but also in the profound spiritual significance and theology behind Bosch's art. The subsequent chapters seem rather forced in relation to the whole: Friedrich Vollhardt surveys the imagination of hell in early modern literature from Dante to Klopstock, after which Bernhard Maaz explores the twentieth-century reception of Bosch in German literature. The exhibited works are framed in seven essays, each written by a different scholar on a different theme, including: 'Vision, Dream, Fantasy', 'End Time', 'The Last Judgement', 'The Monstrous and the Development of the Grotesque' and 'Fools and Dwarfs'. Though rich in iconographical analysis, the catalogue could have benefited from a more focused design and more particular attention to the medium of print itself.

## Clair-obscur: Chiaroscuro Prints in Italy and the North

Michael Bury

*Gravure en clair-obscur: Cranach, Raphaël, Rubens*, edited by Séverine Lepape, contributions by Dominique Cordellier, Victoria Fernandez Masaguer, Peter Fuhring, Catherine Jenkins, Kilian Laclavetine, Marjolein Leesberg, Ger Luijten, Rémi Mathis, Elizabeth Savage, Vanessa Selbach, Roberta Serra, Naoko Takahatake, Caroline Vrand and Edward Wouk, exhibition catalogue, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 18 October 2018–14 January 2019, Paris, Musée du Louvre Éditions in association with LIENART, 2018, 224 pp., 159 ills, €29.

*Gravure en clair-obscur: Cranach, Raphaël, Rubens* is the catalogue of the very fine exhibition, held in Paris, of chiaroscuro prints drawn from the Collection Edmond de Rothschild of the Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Fondation Custodia. A

few additional items were borrowed from the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Rijksmuseum and from Besançon.

The European focus and the inclusion of many rare and unusual items, especially of the later sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries, make this catalogue a valuable addition to the literature. It allows us to appreciate the varied uses to which methods of 'printing light and dark', deploying two or more matrices, could be put.<sup>1</sup> Strikingly illustrated is the range of effects that could be achieved: from the linear precision of the work of Jan Saenredam (1565–1607) after Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), as in *Diligence* (fig. ##3), to the looser pictorialism of Joos Gietleughen (fl. c. 1555) after Frans Floris (1517–70), as in *David Playing the Harp to Saul*, to the overlapping tones of Ugo da Carpi's (1480–1523) *Diogenes*

1. 'Instampare chiaro et scuro', the words of Ugo da Carpi's privilege application to the Venetian Senate in 1516, see

D. Rosand and M. Muraro, *Titian and the Venetian Woodcut*, Washington DC, 1976, p. 36, note 14.