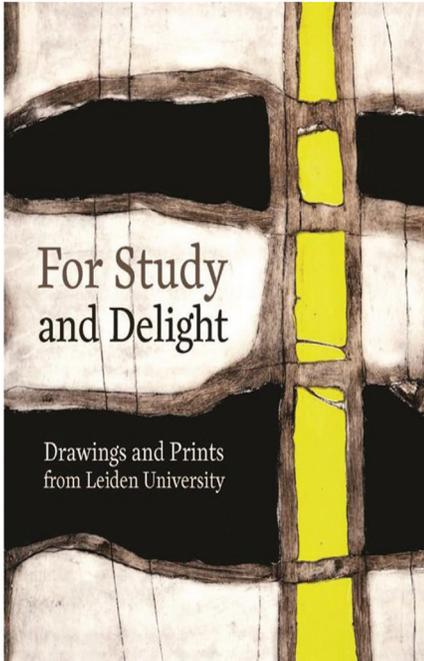


Note

Jef Schaeps, Elmer Kolfin, Edward Grasman and Nelke Bartelings (eds.), *For Study and Delight. Drawings and Prints from Leiden University*, Leiden, Leiden University Press, 2016, 424 pp. ISBN 978-9-087-28241-7.



Founded in 1575, Leiden University is not only the oldest university in the Netherlands, it is also the only one with its own collection of prints and drawings. Even though the collection contains no fewer than 100,000 prints, 12,000 drawings, and 30,000 portraits, it is not so much the size that defines its importance, but the quality and diversity of its holdings. There are prints and drawings, mainly of Dutch origin, ranging from the sixteenth century to the present day, including important works by Jan Gossart (1478-1532), Bernard van Orley (1491/92-1542), Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), Jan Lievens (1607-1674) and Rembrandt (1606-1669).

The collection was brought together over a period of two centuries. It was founded in 1814, when the widow of collector Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807) bequeathed some 800 drawings and 20,000 prints to the university. Several decades later, Nicolaas Cornelis de Gijsselaar (1792-1873) started a process of donation that considerably

expanded the collection. Between 1851 and 1874 this Print Room's second director added some 340 drawings and 2,640 prints from European artists dating from 1500-1800. Amongst this donation were important early Leiden drawings, such as designs for glass paintings by Dirck Crabeth (1510/20-1574) and Jan Swart (1490/1500-1560/70), as well as a *Temptation of St Anthony* by Aertgen van Leyden (c. 1498-c. 1564) and a series of 22 drawings by Leonard Thiry (c. 1500-c. 1550) depicting the story of *Jason and the Golden Fleece*. A third addition came in 1957, when the university was able to purchase the collection of the Amsterdam surgeon Albertus Welcker (1884-1957). Welcker's collection

consisted of a large and varied selection of drawings. The study sheet of *The Spinario and Some Antiquities*, which Jan Gossart drew in Rome in 1508/1509, is considered to be one of Welcker's trophies. Mannerist artists, such as Jacob de Gheyn (1565-1629), Bartholomeus Spranger (1546-1611), Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), Jacob Matham (1571-1631) and Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651) were well represented in his collection.

In 2014 the Leiden University Collection celebrated its birthday by exhibiting a selection of Dutch drawings from the Seventeenth Century at The Rembrandt House Museum in Amsterdam. At this occasion an exhibition catalogue was published, *Leiden viert feest*, edited by Jef Schaeps and Jaap van der Veen. The book under review here, *For Study and Delight. Drawings and Prints from Leiden University*, is the second, somewhat belated, celebration of the bicentennial of the Leiden Print Room's foundation, and nicely complements the earlier catalogue.

Overlap between the two publications is kept at a minimum, and while *Leiden viert feest!* was published only in Dutch, *For Study and Delight* is published in English. Presenting an overview of the different strengths of the collection, *For Study and Delight* is also broader in range. An informative table of donations, loans and bequeaths gives insight into the history of the collection. The main body of the book consists of fifteen compact essays, each of which is followed by reproductions of a selection of related objects. With only four chapters on nineteenth to twenty-first-century art, the majority of the book is devoted to early modern drawings and prints. The chapters are ordered chronologically, each of them focusing on the objects from the Leiden Collection within their broader art historical context.

Jef Schaeps, the current keeper of the collection, opens the book with a chapter on rare sixteenth-century drawings and their initial function. Gert-Jan van der Sman focuses on the importance of Bartholomeus Spranger for Mannerism in the Northern Netherlands. Elmer Kolfin takes us into the seventeenth century by discussing painters in the Golden Age who also produced prints. The fourth chapter, again by Schaeps, sheds light on the drawings from the Dutch Golden Age, while the fifth, by Nelke Bartelings, discusses French printmaking of the seventeenth century. Bartelings also contributed the next chapter on Dutch drawings from the eighteenth century, and Elmer Kolfin discusses printmaking in that era. Understandably special attention is given to the extraordinary first director of the collection, the artist and art theorist David Humbert de Superville (1770-1849), of whom several artworks are part of the collection. The drawings dating from the first half of the twentieth century from the Welcker collection are the subject of a separate chapter. To finalize the chronological build up, Jef Schaeps, in his third contribution, discusses a selection of the contemporary artworks added to the collection in recent years.

Two thematical chapters are a welcome addition to the chronological ones: Frans Laurentius's on portraiture and Marringje Rikken's on plant and animal drawings. The latter theme might surprise those familiar with the collection. Whereas the Print Rooms contains some 35,000 portraits, it owns 'only' 150 items related to plants and animals. Biology, however, forms an important focus at Leiden University, and therefore the plant and animal drawings deserve special attention. The sub-collection offers a comprehensive view of plant and animal drawings throughout the centuries, with a focus on the early modern period. The collection contains sheets of high artistic quality, by renowned but

also unknown artists. The wonderful *Monkey* by Jacob Matham (1671-1631), the *Goose* by Pieter (II) Holsteyn (c. 1614-1673) and the *Camel* by Cornelis Saftleven (1607-1681) show how animals were drawn 'naer het leven' (after life). The *Succulent*, by Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) or her daughter Johanna Helena Herolt (1668-1723/30), tells a story about the artist's role in studying nature on request of plant and animal collectors. These two thematical chapters not only show some of the special focal areas within the Leiden collection, they also form a wonderful example of how cross relations can be found within it. Unfortunately, the chapter on plants and animals lacks footnotes, which surely would have addressed the detailed entries on some of the wonderful sheets in *Leiden viert feest!* The inclusion of footnotes would have been a nice invitation to use the books together as complementary publications.

All in all, *For Study and Delight* is a sheer pleasure both to read *and* to look at, owing to the beautiful design by Antoinette Hanekuyk. No doubt the book will function well as an introduction to the collection, which can be studied online through the print rooms website (<https://www.library.universiteitleiden.nl/special-collections/about/prints-drawings-and-portraits>). Currently, virtually all the drawings are online, while digitization of the prints is underway. It is to be hoped this publication and the website will stimulate current and future students to develop an interest in art on paper and to raise more international awareness for the Leiden treasures.

Leonore van Sloten, The Rembrandt House Museum