

PRESS RELEASE

PASSION FOR PICTURES: DUTCH DRAWINGS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1 October 2020 to 10 January 2021

Exhibition Hall of the Collection of Prints and Drawings

Frankfurt am Main, 17 July 2020. With nearly 600 works, the Städel Museum has one of the most extensive and artistically significant collections of eighteenth-century Dutch drawings outside the Netherlands. From 1 October 2020 to 10 January 2021, the Städel is for the first time dedicating an exhibition to this valuable collection. On display will be eighty representative drawings by artists who are hardly known today, but who were often very successful in their time, as well as by art-loving amateurs who drew at a high level. The exhibition will bring together preparatory drawings for large-format wall and ceiling decorations by Jacob de Wit, book illustrations by Bernard Picart, Dutch topographies by Cornelis Pronk, Paulus Constantijn la Fargue and Hendrik Schepper and atmospheric landscape drawings by Jacob Cats, the brothers Jacob and Abraham van Strij and Franciscus Andreas Milatz, decorative floral and fruit still lifes by Jan van Huysum and his numerous successors, as well as depictions of exotic animals by Aert Schouman and satirical genre scenes by Cornelis Troost and Jacobus Buys. The selected works impressively illustrate the revaluation and emancipation of the drawing in the Netherlands in the eighteenth century, as well as the preference for picturesquely executed, coloured drawings and the repeatedly sought-after examination of the art of the seventeenth century, the Netherlands' Golden Age.

Outside its country of origin, Dutch art of the eighteenth century is far less well known and famous than the art of the Golden Age. Nevertheless, there was a flourishing production of art in the century of the Enlightenment, particularly in centres such as Amsterdam, Haarlem, The Hague and Dordrecht. There, in addition to paintings and prints, drawings were produced on a large scale and at a high level, many of which were made for sale as works of art and collected throughout Europe. The founder of the Städel Museum, Johann Friedrich Städel (1728–1816), and his friend Johann Georg Grambs (1756–1817) were also collectors of eighteenth-century Dutch

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drawings. With these, they acquired works of their present or recent past and thus at the same time an art that corresponded particularly to the bourgeois taste of the time. With his death in 1816, Städel's collection became the property of his foundation; the works of art from the estate of Grambs, a member of the first Städel Board of Trustees, were added only one year later. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue of holdings impressively illustrate the spectrum and quality of the collection of eighteenth-century Dutch drawings in the Städel Museum.

Curator: Annett Sandfort

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