



19th - 20th Century Drawings
Summer 2025

DEN OTTER

FINE ART



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1. Abraham Johannes Ruytenschildt

(Amsterdam 1778-1841)

Two studies of a boy seen from behind and a subsidiary study of his hands and legs
inscribed and dated 'Zonder Wet of Spreuk./ 18 November 1816' (verso)

red chalk, point of the brush and grey ink

20.5 x 32.2 cm

In order to meet the need of artists to draw after models, a growing number of *tekengenootschappen* (drawing societies) were founded in the 18th and 19th centuries. These societies enabled artists to draw after (often draped) life models in group sessions, which resulted in drawn figure studies which could later be used in the artist's paintings. One such society was *Zonder Wet of Spreuk* in Amsterdam which was founded in *circa* 1807 and existed until 1822.¹ Amongst its members were Albertus Brondgeest (1786-1849), Jan Hulswit (1766-1822), Pieter Gerardus van Os (1776-1839) and Abraham Johannes Ruytenschildt. Virtually nothing was known about the society until Robert-Jan te Rijdt published his article shedding light on it. Based on a document from Ruytenschildt's estate containing a list of names and expenses²—linked by Te Rijdt to another document from the estate of Pieter Ernst Hendrik Praetorius—he was able to identify the society, locate it, and determine its members.³

Many figure drawings executed during drawing sessions at the society by its members have survived and a number of these carry inscriptions that state that the drawing was made during one of the societies' drawing sessions, as is the case with the present sheet.⁴ The majority of drawings made during one of these life drawing sessions, however, do not carry such an inscription but some of them can be related to the society nonetheless.

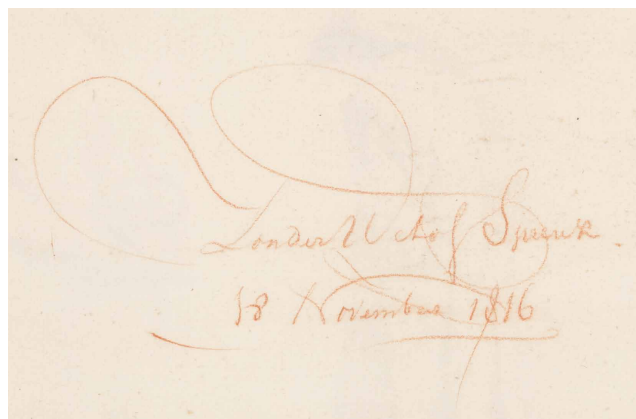


Fig. 1. Verso

1 L.A. Schwartz, *The Dutch Drawings in The Teyler Museum. Artists born between 1740 and 1800*, Haarlem, Ghent and Doornspijk, 2004, p. 29.

2 The document is in the Rijksmuseum; inv. RP-D-1990-37.

3 R.J. te Rijdt, 'Figuurstudies van het Amsterdamse particuliere tekengenootschap 'Zonder Wet of Spreuk' (ca. 1808-1819)', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, XXXVIII, 1990, p. 224.

4 R.J. te Rijdt, *op. cit.*, p. 225, fig. 1.



The present drawing is a characteristic example of Ruytenschildt's draughtsmanship and it can be closely compared stylistically to drawings by other members of the society. In fact, the same boy was drawn – no doubt during the same drawing session – by Albertus Brondgeest, whose drawing is dated 1816.⁵ With the recent emergence of the present drawing, we now have exact date of execution, as it is inscribed '18 November 1816' on its verso. The same boy appears again in a painting by Pieter Ernst Hendrik Praetorius which was executed ten years later, in 1826, demonstrating the society's practice of using drawn models, in their paintings and prints.⁶



Fig. 2. Albertus Brondgesst, *Two studies of a boy seen from behind*, red chalk, 18 x 26.4 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

⁵ Te Rijdt, *ibid.*, p. 237, fig. 28.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 237, fig. 27; sold at Bubba Kuyper, Haarlem, 17 May 2024, lot 5916.



2. Abraham Johannes Ruytenschildt

(Amsterdam 1778-1841)

Two studies of a boy with a hat

inscribed and dated 'Zonder Wet of Spreuk./ 9 december 1816' (verso)

red chalk, countermark IV

21 x 32.4 cm

Like the previous drawing, this one was also executed during a drawing session at the Amsterdam drawing society *Zonder Wet of Spreuk* which, according to the inscription on the verso, took place three weeks after that of the previous drawing. Ruytenschildt must have drawn this boy at a drawing session that was also attended by Pieter Gerardus van Os (1776-1839), who was also a member of *Zonder Wet of Spreuk*, as the same boy appears, in reverse, in an etching by the latter artist (Fig. 2).¹

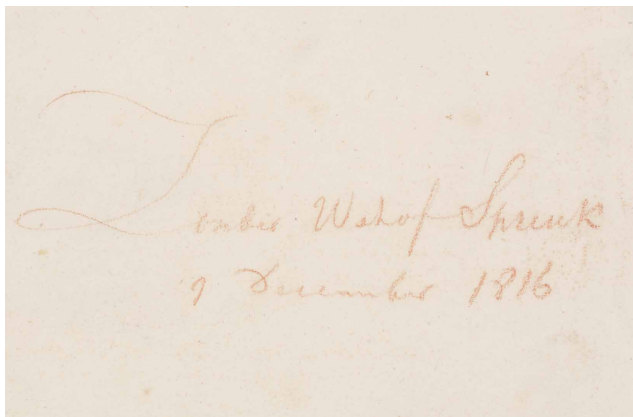


Fig. 1 Verso



Fig. 2. Pieter Gerardus van Os, Various figures, etching, 12 x 15.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



¹ See for an impression; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; inv. RP-P-1913-2342.

3. Abraham Johannes Ruytenschildt

(Amsterdam 1778-1841)

Two houses in Bentheim

black chalk

30.8 x 43.8 cm

This large drawing, depicting two houses and trees against a blank background, must depict a view in the German town of Bentheim (now called Bad Bentheim). Bentheim's medieval castle and old picturesque centre, both perched on a hill, had been a popular destination for artists, ever since Jacob van Ruysdael (1629-1681) and Nicolaes Berchem (1621-1683) were the first to travel there to depict its landscape in a large number of drawings.¹

Ruytenschildt too went to Bentheim, together with Albertus Brondgeest, a fellow member of the drawing society *Zonder Wet of Spreuk*.² While the exact date of their journey to Bentheim is unknown, drawings depicting views in Bentheim by both Ruytenschildt and Brondgeest, dated between 1826 and 1833, have survived.³ The two houses shown in the present drawing are typical of those in Bentheim and those in the area near the town's important sandstone quarry. Similar houses, for example, can be seen in a more worked out drawing by Ruytenschildt, previously in the C.P. van Eeghen collection, The Hague.⁴ Two drawings by Albertus Brondgeest, furthermore, (both previously in the I.Q. van Regteren Altena, Amsterdam), depict similar houses in Bentheim.⁵ The present sheet stands out for its swift and bold execution and the unfinished quality might indicate that it was drawn in Bentheim on the spot, rather than later in the artist's studio.



¹ See Y. Bleyerveld *et al.*, *Onderweg naar Bentheim. Tekenreizen door Twente in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw*, exhib. cat., Enschede, Rijksmuseum Twente, 2023-2024.

² A group of drawings by Ruytenschildt depicting Bentheim was recently offered by Onno van Seggelen Fine Art, Rotterdam.

³ See <https://www.onnovanseggelen.com/notable-sales/abraham-johannes-ruytenschildt-amsterdam-1778-1841-amsterdam-forest-view-with-an-old-oak-tree> [accessed 1 May 2025].

⁴ See RKD, image number 3968317.

⁵ See Christie's, Amsterdam, 10 December 2014, The I.Q. van Regteren Altena Collection, Part II: Dutch & Flemish Drawings from 1500 to 1900, lot 71 and Christie's, Amsterdam, The I.Q. van Regteren Altena Collection, Part IV: Dutch & Flemish Drawings from 1500 to 1900, lot 61.

4. Dutch School, 18th century

Sleeping hermaphrodite (recto and verso)

black chalk, watermark Strasbourg lily and letters JH[onig] & Z

27.2 x 43.7 cm

This double-sided drawing is after the famous Roman sculpture showing a sleeping hermaphrodite (fig. 1). The sculpture was discovered in Rome in 1618 and soon after its discovery it entered the collection of Cardinal Scipione Caffarelli-Borghese (1577-1633). The Cardinal commissioned Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) to execute the buttoned mattress and he had it displayed at the Villa Borghese. In 1807 it was sold to the French state and transferred to the Louvre where it is on display until this day.¹ The paper on which the drawing is executed suggests it was drawn by a Dutch artist, who either saw the sculpture in the Villa Borghese or the Louvre.



(recto)



(verso)

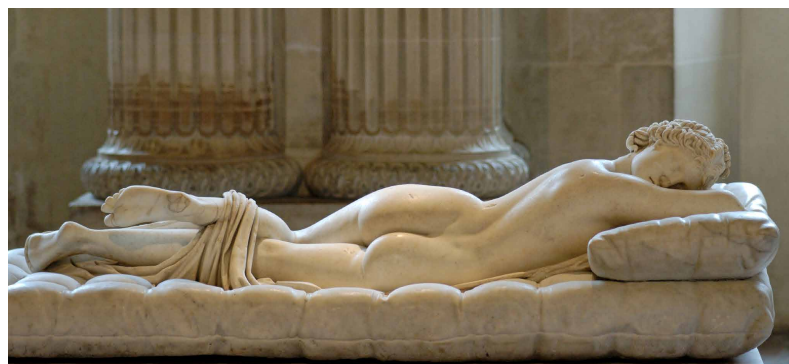


Fig. 1

¹ inv. MR 220.

5. Pieter Ernst Hendrik Praetorius

(Amsterdam 1791-1876)

A wagon between two houses

signed with initials 'P'P' (recto) and with inscription 'Praetorius' (on the old mount)

black chalk, wetted black chalk, grey wash and black ink framing lines

25.2 x 18.4 cm



6. Julius Hübner

(Oleśnica 1806-1882 Lockwitz)

The artist's dog, Ali

signed, dated and inscribed '13⁺ März 50./ Ali/ JH [interlaced]/ 4.'

graphite

10.5 x 16.1 cm

Hübner was born in Oleśnica in 1806, and by the age of eleven, both of his parents had died, leaving the young Julius an orphan. By the age of fourteen, Hübner's artistic ambitions were evident, and a year later he embarked on his artistic career as a student at the Berlin Academy where he studied under Wilhelm von Schadow (1789-1862). Hübner became close friends with several fellow students, including Theodor Hildebrandt (1804-1874), Karl Friedrich Lessing (1808-1880) and Karl Sohn (1805-1867), as well as with Von Schadow himself. When the latter was appointed director of the Academy in Düsseldorf, Hübner and his friends followed him there.¹ Under the supervision of Von Schadow, Hübner and his close friends formed an artistic collective known as the Düsseldorf Schule. Strongly influenced by literary sources, these artists produced works in a variety of media, unified in a coherent style that bore the clear influence of the Nazarene movement. Hübner's clean, highly stylised and technically refined drawing's style is reminiscent, for example, of those by artists such as Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869) and Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794-1872).

In 1829, Hübner married Pauline Bendemann, the sister of his artist-friend Eduard Bendemann. In that same year, the couple went off to Italy for a long sojourn. In 1842, Hübner was appointed Professor of History Painting at the Royal Academy of Dresden, and later served as its director from 1871 to 1882, the year of his death. While in Dresden, the Hübners became close friends with Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Robert and Clara Schumann, who composed a march for the their 50th wedding anniversary.

While Julius Hübner primarily treated portraits and history subjects in his paintings, his drawings give a valuable glimpse into the artist's private life. That the family dog 'Ali', shown in the present sheet while asleep, must have been a much-loved member of the Hübner family, is attested by the fact that the dog appears in the artists drawings, prints and paintings. In this little sheet, which Hübner drew on the 13th of March 1850, Ali is shown reclining on a cushion. While swiftly drawn from life, the sheet is a refined token of the artist's love for his dog. Ali is furthermore shown in a lithograph, also from 1850, and in a painting from a year later.²



¹ M. Sitt et al., *Lexikon der Düsseldorfer Malerschule. 1819-1918. Band 2. Haach - Murtfeldt*, Munich, 1998, p 145.

² See https://www.juliushuebner.de/DE/1851_der_hund_ali.html [accessed 13 May 2025].

7. Julius Hübner

(Olesnica 1806-1882 Lockwitz)

The artist's wife, Pauline Hübner (née Bendemann)

inscribed 'Pauline'

graphite

15.6 x 13.3 cm

This delicate drawing shows two head studies of the artist's wife, Pauline Hübner, whom he married in 1829. That same year, Hübner made a large picture, measuring 189.5 x 130 cm, now in the Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, depicting Pauline seated—presumably with their own dog—as a token of his love for her.¹ The painting is rich in symbolic meaning: the dog represents loyalty, while the open jewellery box and the shell introduce an erotic undertone. The present drawing is undated, but Pauline's apparent Biedermeier hairstyle, suggests that it was drawn between *circa* 1829 and mid-19th century. Pauline, furthermore, is shown in a study for the picture in Berlin² and in a drawing in a private collection showing her with one of their children, Emma.³



Fig. 1 Julius Hübner, *Pauline Hübner*, oil on canvas, 189.5 x 130 cm, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie.

1 M. Sitt et al., *Lexikon der Düsseldorfer Malerschule. 1819-1918. Band 2. Haach - Murtfeldt*, Munich, 1998, fig. 178.

2 See http://www.juliushuebner.de/DE/1828_pauline_bendemann.html [accessed 13- 05-2025]

3 See http://www.juliushuebner.de/DE/1830_studie_zum_kollektivgemalde.html [accessed 13- 05-2025]



8. Julius Hübner

(Olesnica 1806-1882 Lockwitz)

The artist's son, Martin

dated and inscribed '21 febr. 49./ Martin'

graphite

7.5 x 12 cm

sold together with

Julius Hübner (Olesnica 1806-1882 Lockwitz)

A young boy seated at a table

inscribed 'ohne korrektur' (?)

etching

10.1 x 9.7 cm

Pauline and Julius Hübner had eight children, of which Martin was the youngest. He was born on the 1st of January 1846, so he had just turned 3 years old when his father made this delicate drawing of him. Unlike his older brother Edouard, who became a painter, Martin did not choose to follow in his father's footsteps and became a banker instead. Little is known about his life, making this small drawing an all the more interesting object that documents Hübner's youngest son.



Fig. 1. Julius Hübner, *Portrait of a boy*, etching.



9. André-Eugène Costilhes

(Cunlhat 1865-1940 Jouars-Pontchartrain)

Portrait of a woman

graphite

31 x 19.7 cm

Provenance:

The artist's estate (L. 4150).



10. Paul Schröter

(Kempen 1866-1946 Linow)

Studies of two sleeping women and flowers

with inscription '21'

black chalk

25.6 x 18.4 cm

Provenance:

The artist's estate (the artist's studio stamp, not in Lugt).



11. Jan Catharinus Adriaan Goedhart

(Siloe Toewa 1893-1975 Voorburg)

A female nude on a rock

signed and inscribed 'JCA Goedhart/ Kerkstraat 134/ Amsterdam' (verso)

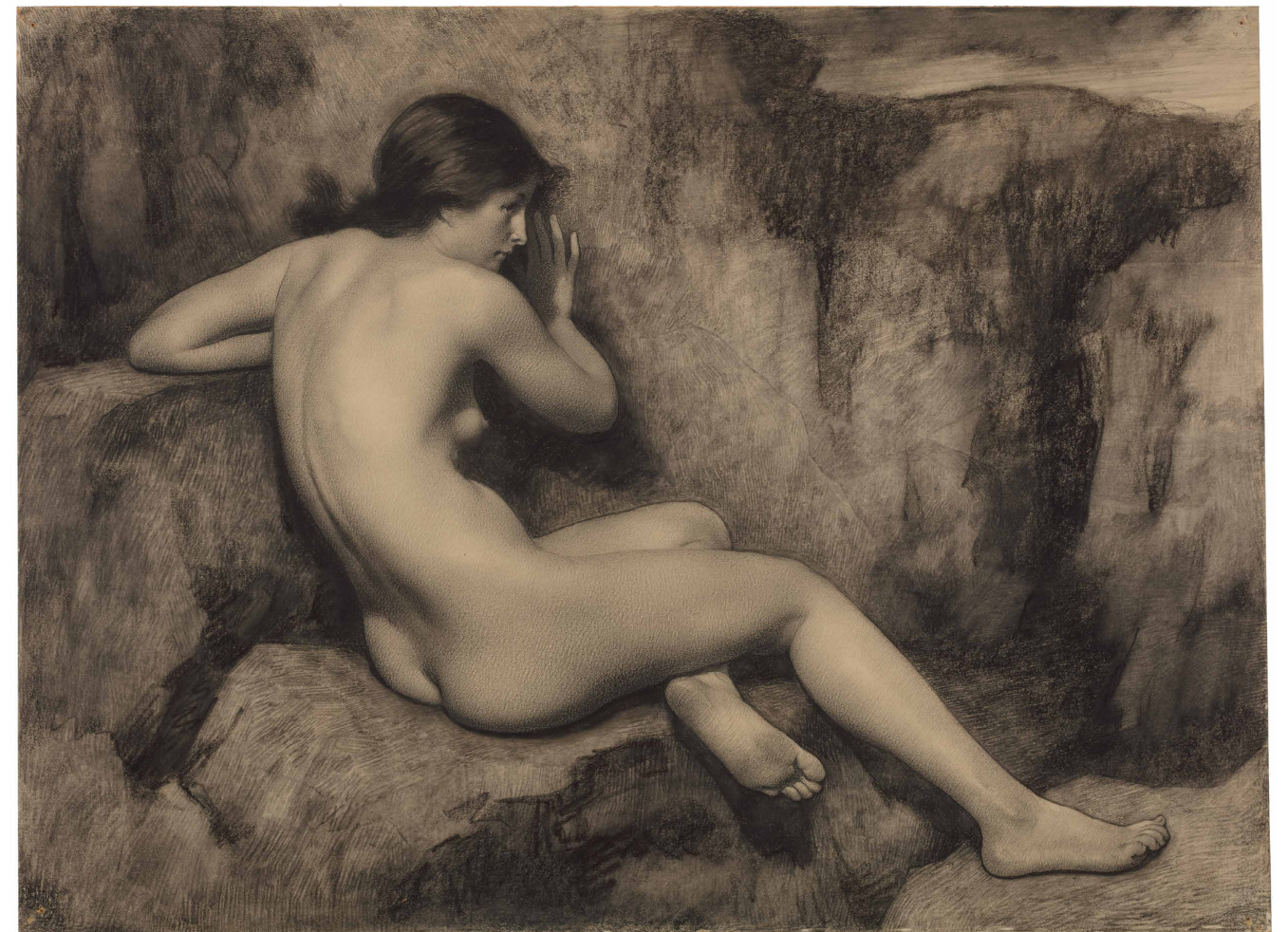
charcoal, black chalk and graphite

47.8 x 64.2 cm

Goedhart was born in 1893 in Siloe Toewa on the island of Sumatra, then part of the former Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). When six years old, Goedhart was sent to The Netherlands where his talent as a draughtsman was recognized early on. In 1911 he enrolled at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, and, after an interruption caused by the First World War, Goedhart graduated in 1921 and set up as an independent artist in Amsterdam in that year.



Fig. 1. Photographer unknown, The artist's studio at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, date unknown.

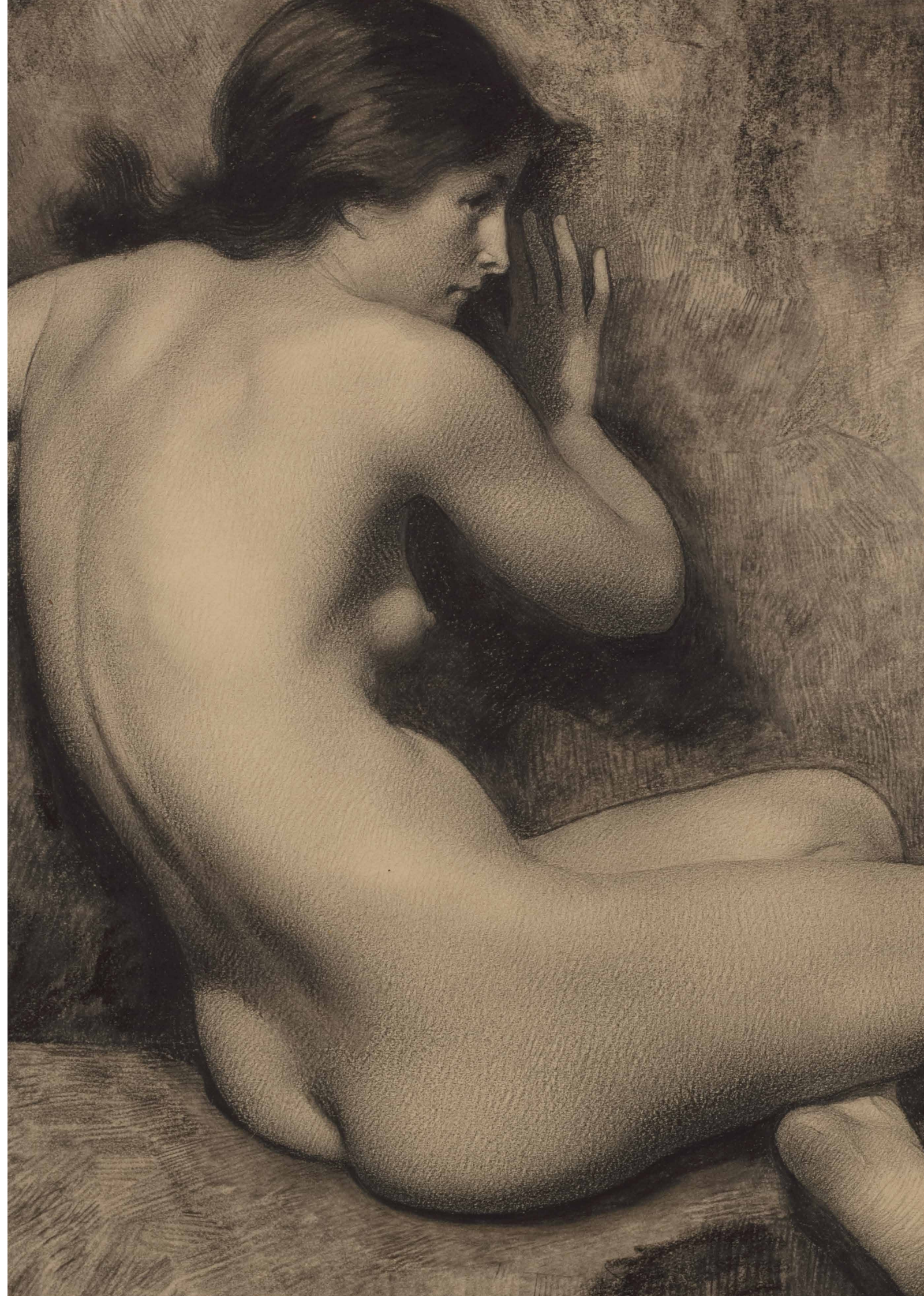


Goedhart's passion for the sea and shipping – likely inherited from his father who was a naval officer – was evident from an early age. Later in his career, Goedhart would specialise in maritime painting while he also produced landscapes as well as portraits and still-lives. During his academic training, part of Goedhart's artistic education involved drawing from life models. Although he rarely dated his drawings, the present sheet was almost certainly executed during this formative period.

The sheet stands out for its exceptional execution and treatment of its subject matter. The beautifully sculpted nude is drawn with very fine and soft handling of the charcoal which is contrasted by the sketchy rocks on which the woman is seated. While this composition recurs with differences in a number of the artist's works, the present drawing ranks amongst the artist's finest drawings. An impressionistic oil painting showing a closely related nude is in a private collection¹ and a very closely related painting, apparently of similar size as the present drawing, appears in a photograph showing Goedhart's father seated in the artist's studio at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam (fig. 1).² The photograph is undated, but must have been taken in 1921, or before, and it seems likely that the present drawing was also made before that time (possibly in preparation of the painting).

1 A. Knoops, *J.C.A. Goedhart. Schilder naar het leven*, Schiedam, 2009, p. 64, fig. 53.

2 A. Knoops, *Met het oog op de zee. J.C.A. Goedhart 1893-1975*, Leiden, 2006, fig. 11, pp. 14-15.



12. Rudolf von Türcke

(Meiningen 1839-1915 Dresden)

Portrait of the artist Robert Schietzold

signed and inscribed 'R. v. Türcke fecit bei Abendbeleuchtung' (*recto*) and with inscription

'gez. R.v. Türcke, Dresden. Portrait./ Louis [...] Schietzold. (L. Richter Schüler)' (*verso*)

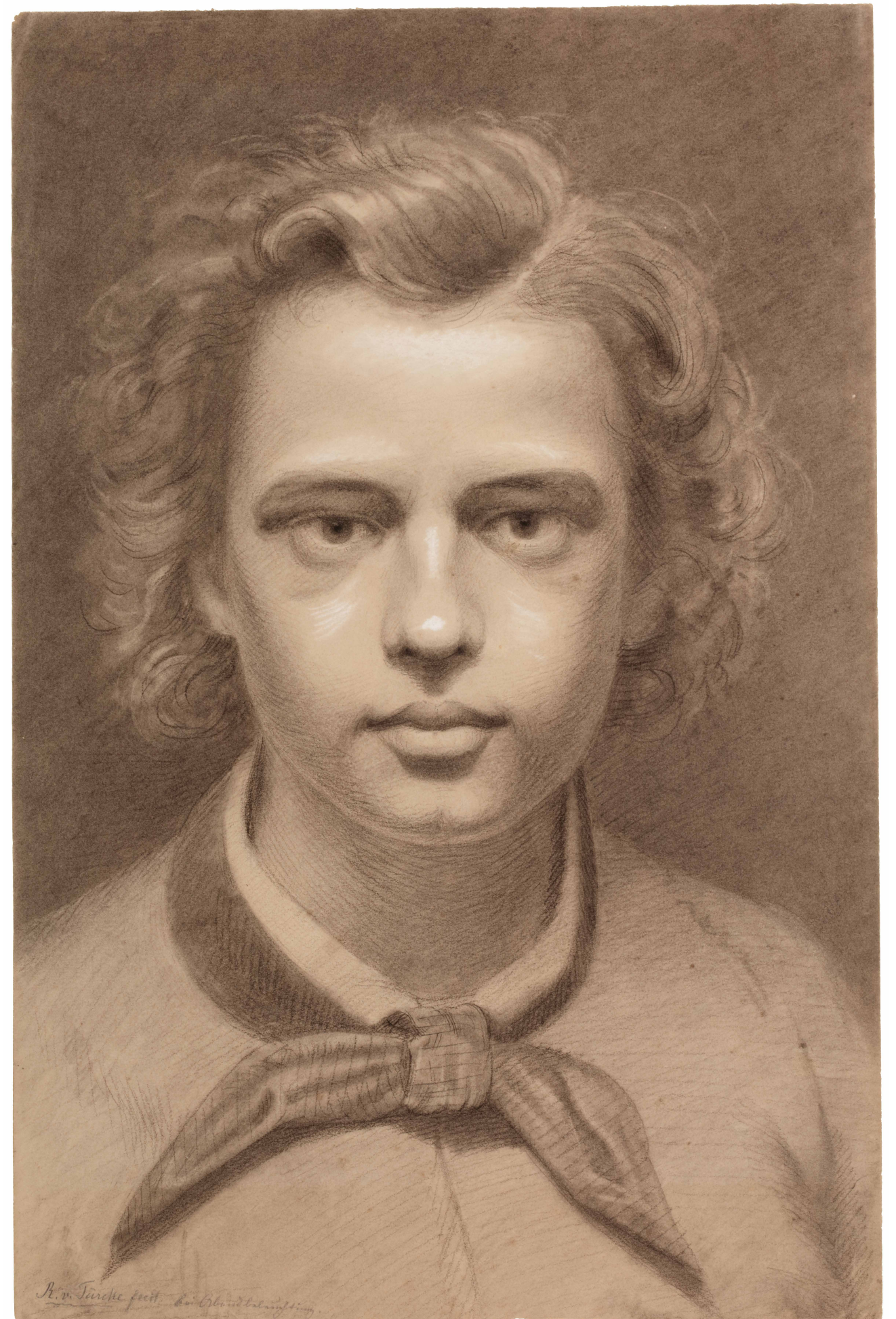
black chalk, charcoal, stumping, heightened with white

39.5 x 26.3 cm

This powerful portrait by Rudolf von Türcke depicts the artist Robert Schietzold (1842-1908). Close contemporaries, Von Türcke and Schietzold both studied at the Dresden academy under Ludwig Richter (1803-1884).¹ They went on to specialise in landscape painting and topographical scenes. While little is known about both artists, this touching portrait 'drawn at evening light' (according to the inscription) serves as a valuable testament to their connection and presumed friendship. Another, more sketch like drawing by Von Türcke showing the artist Ludwig Theodor Choulant (1827-1900) at work, is in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.²

¹ E. Bénézit et al., *Dictionary of artists, Volume 13, Sommer-Valverane*, Paris, 2006, p. 1262.

² Inv. C 1933-280.



13. Albert François Larteau

(Nancy 1870-1949 Paris)

Rifles and a knife hanging on a wall

signed 'ALarteau'

pastel

45 x 31 cm



14. Edmund Steppes

(Burghausen 1873-1968 Deggendorf)

Bittersweet nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*)

signed with initials and dated '1915'

watercolour and bodycolour, fragmentary watermark 'G'

29.5 x 21 cm

As is evident from this group of six drawings, Edmund Steppes drew inspiration primarily from two sources: nature and the works of German artists from the 14th-16th centuries, as well as from more modern artists. The following sheets beautifully illustrate these influences – from the almost scientific, yet still poetically rendered *Bittersweet Nightshade*, to a finely observed mountainous landscape; and from the drapery on a church pew, which reveals Albrecht Dürer's influence, to the gnarled tree that recalls the landscape drawings of Vincent van Gogh.

Edmund Steppes was born in 1873 in Burghausen in Upper Bavaria, but moved to Munich along with his family in 1882. In 1893 he enrolled at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste¹, but he left the academy before finishing his studies (This may have been due to the resentment his success provoked among students and professors, after he exhibited his work at the Munich Kunstverein- an honour typically reserved for academy students who had been nominated as *Meisterschüler*). Despite leaving the academy prematurely, Steppes quickly gained success as an independent artist. He exhibited at the Munich Secession from 1897 onwards and his work was sought-after by both private clients as well as by German institutions. That the German Old Masters were a key source of inspiration for Steppes is confirmed in his 1907 pamphlet *Die deutsche Malerei*, in which he advocated for a return to the artistic principles of Old German and Old Netherlandish painters. He emphasized that the artists of the 14th and 15th centuries embodied the true 'essence' of German art.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Steppes exhibited at the *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung*. In 1943, he was awarded the Goethe Medal for Art and Science by Hitler, and the following year his name was included on the so-called *Gottbegnadeten-Liste*- a list of artists, writers, actors, composers, and musicians deemed essential to German culture and thus exempt from military service in the final stages of the war. In January 1945 Steppes' studio was destroyed by an Allied bomb, which led to the loss of numerous drawings and around forty paintings. After the war Steppes moved to Tuttlingen and continued to work and exhibiting his work there. For his 90th birthday, in 1963, a retrospective exhibition was held in Tuttlingen and long after the artist's death, another retrospective exhibition which included paintings, drawings and etchings was mounted at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe in 1973.²

¹ E. Bénézit et al., *Dictionary of artists, Volume 13, Sommer-Valverane*, Paris, 2006, p. 1262.

² See exhib. cat., *Edmund Steppes (1873-1968). Gemälde - Zeichnungen - Graphik*, Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe.



15. Edmund Steppes

(Burghausen 1873-1968 Deggendorf)

A hollow willow

signed and dated 'Ed. St. 6.5.1918.' (recto)

pen and brown ink

20.8 x 17.8 cm



16. Edmund Steppes

(Burghausen 1873-1968 Deggendorf)

Two studies of a toad

signed with initials 'ES' and dated '1893'

pen and black ink

14 x 12 cm



17. Edmund Steppes

(Burghausen 1873-1968 Deggendorf)

Draperie over a prie-dieu

signed with initials 'Em.St.' and dated '1921.' and illegibly inscribed (upper left, *recto*)

pen and brown ink

21.2 x 17.1 cm



18. Edmund Steppes

(Burghausen 1873-1968 Deggendorf)

Sunrise at a mountainous landscape

signed with initials and dated 'Em. St./ 1912' (recto)

pen and brown ink, coloured chalks, watercolour and bodycolour

14.3 x 25.8 cm



19. Ernst Eitner
(Hamburg 1867-1955)

A portrait of Paul Schröter while painting, Schröter's wife Margarete and Ernst Eitner's wife, Antonia 'Toni' Eitner in Wallgau, Germany

signed and inscribed 'E. Eitner/ Wallgau 1.7. '39' (recto) and 'Toni Eitner/ Frau Marg. Schroeter/ Paul Schroeter/ in Wallgau/ 1872' (verso)

graphite, watercolour

22.3 x 15.3 cm

This quickly sketched drawing, executed on a sketchbook page (with the perforated edge still visible along the upper edge), offers a wonderfully informal glimpse into the personal lives of the artists Paul Schröter and Ernst Eitner, along with their wives, Margarete Schröter and Antonia Eitner. According to the inscription on the *recto*, the drawing was made on the 1st of July, 1939. The sheet also bears the inscription 'Wallgau', referring to the town of the same name in southern Germany near the Walchensee. This lake, most likely depicted in the background, is situated just north of the Alps near the Austrian border. Eitner chose a particularly original viewpoint: the women, absorbed in reading, take centre stage, while the artist Paul Schröter is depicted in the background. The relaxed postures—especially that of the woman in the foreground with her feet propped on a chair—evoke a timeless atmosphere of holiday leisure.

Ernst Eitner, born in Hamburg in 1867¹, was one of the founding members of the Hamburgischen Künstlerclub, founded in 1897, and is generally considered one of its most experimental members.² The artist's swift working method and impressionistic style earned him the nickname 'Monet of the North'. Eitner left a monumental and varied *œuvre* consisting of many self-portraits, portraits of his wife Antonia known as 'Toni'³ as well as large number of topographical views and cityscapes.⁴



¹E. Bénézit et al., *Dictionary of artists, Volume 5*, Dyck-Géignani, Paris, 2006, p. 137.

² See: <https://www.shmh.de/journal-ernst-eitner/> [accessed 12 June 2025].

³ See for examples: https://www.museen-nord.de/objekte?ceid=7&no_cache=1&tx_joportal_listeneinstieg%5Baction%5D=list&tx_joportal_listeneinstieg%5Bcontroller%5D=Museo&tx_joportal_listeneinstieg%5Bjopaginatepage%5D=2 [accessed 12 June 2025].

⁴ See: https://www.museen-nord.de/objekte?no_cache=1&tx_joportal_listeneinstieg%5Bcontroller%5D=Museo [accessed 12 June 2025].

20. Adri Pieck

(Scheveningen 1894-1982 Hollandsche Rading)

A self-portrait

signed 'Adr. Pieck' (recto) and inscribed 'Zelfportret/ ten geschenk aan/ familie G.G.

Veenendaal/ Adri Pieck' (verso)

pastel, gouache and watercolour

69.5 x 57.3 cm

Adrie Pieck was born into an artistic family; she was the niece of Anton and Henri Pieck, and Adrie and her three sisters received drawing lessons from a young age from her parents.¹ While Adri's sister Gretha also became an artist, she died young – in contrast to Adri who lived a long life and left a particularly monumental *œuvre*. Large groups of her works are preserved in the Singer Museum, Laren and Museum Flehite, Amersfoort. Like many of her contemporaries she was strongly influenced by Vincent van Gogh and like that artist Pieck treated a wide variety of subjects in her work, from topographical views to portraits, genre scenes, landscapes, still-lives and self-portraits. The latter part forms an important part of her painted and drawn *œuvre*; throughout her career Pieck produced self-portraits, often – as is the case here – depicting herself at work, gazing confidently at the viewer. The present work relates to a painting from 1962 that is slightly larger and shows a closely comparable composition, in the Collectie Hilversum.² According to the inscription on the verso, Adri presented the present drawing to the family of G.G. Veenendaal, who took the initiative to publish the book *Het leven en werken van Gretha en Adri Pieck* in 1983.



Fig. 1. Adri Pieck, *Self-portrait*, oil on canvas, 80.5 x 62 cm, 1962, Collectie Hilversum.

1 E. Depenbrock and M. Pieck, *Het leven en werken van Gretha en Adri Pieck*, Weesp, 1983, pp. 5-6.

2 See: <https://www.collectiehilversum.nl/collectie/zelfportret-met-palet-in-t-atelier-1962> [accessed 24 June 2025].



21. Karl Wolf

(Munich 1901-1993)

A ghostly head

signed and dated '[19]28/6' (recto)

waxed black chalk and grey wash

22 x 20 cm

Throughout art history, dreams - whether nightmarish or revelatory - have been an important source of inspiration for artists. Interest in dreams reached its peak in the beginning of the 20th century with the emergence of the Surrealist movement shortly after the First World War. In his *Manifeste du surréalisme*, André Breton recounted that "Reportedly, in times gone by, Saint-Pol-Roux used to have a sign posted on the door of his manor house in Camaret every night before he went to sleep, which read 'the poet is working.'" - an idea fundamental to the Surrealist ethos. Bréton believed in "the future resolution of these two apparently so contradictory states, dream and reality, into a kind of absolute reality, into *surreality*". His manifesto, among others, became highly influential, and Surrealism left a profound mark on the art of its time.

Karl Wolf, who was born, lived, and worked in Munich throughout his life, was one of many artists who explored this surreal or dreamlike world in his work. The present drawing, along with the one that follows, was created just four years after Bréton's manifesto was published and seems rooted in its ideology. These works also bring to mind the drawings of Victor Hugo, in which ghosts and dreams seem to emerge from ink blots and smudges and are thus also a continuation of a tradition that reached deep into the history of art.



22. Karl Wolf

(Munich 1901-1993)

Five ghostly figures

signed with initials and dated '[19]28' (recto)

waxed black chalk

32.6 x 20.5 cm



23. Eduard Houbolt

(Hof van Delft 1885-1954 The Hague)

Iris Numerata

signed, dated and inscribed 'Eduard Houbolt/ fecit. ad. vivum/ 10. Juni. 1947/ . IRIS

NUMERATA. (recto) and 'fig. 2./ 1/2/ Vos [...] verso/ k 4689/3' (verso)

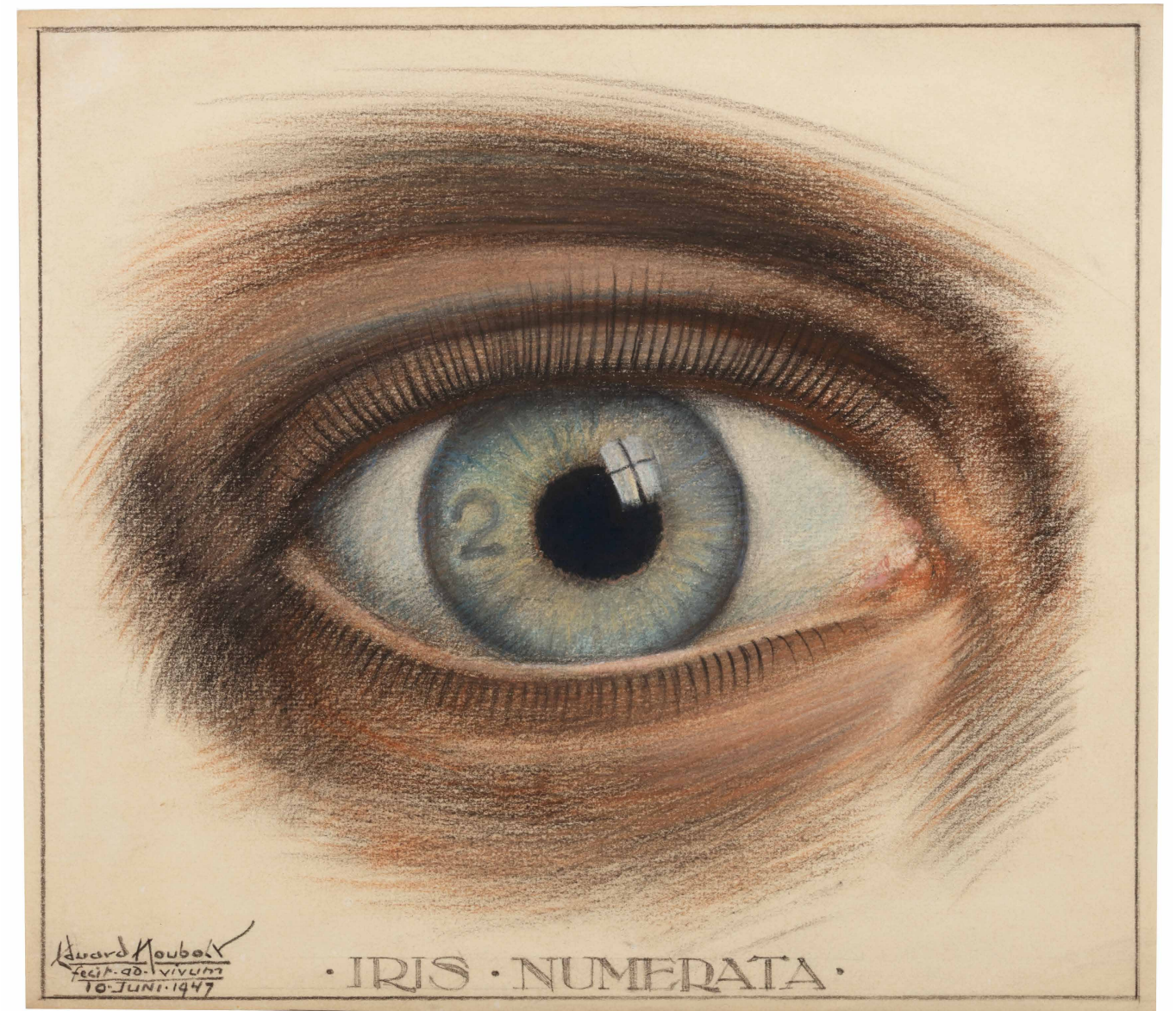
pastel, watermark 'G Schut & Zonen'

22 x 24.9 cm

Eduard Houbolt was born in Hof van Delft (now part of Delft) in 1885.¹ While he sojourned in France and Belgium from 1925-1926 (Paris and Bruges) and in 1939 (Antwerp and Lier), the artist settled in The Hague in 1939 where he worked until his death in 1955. Houbolt was a member of the 'Haagse Schetsclub' and the 'Nederlandse Kunstkring' and according to P.A. Scheen he was particularly celebrated for his topographical views of Delft, Rijswijk and The Hague.² The artist trained at the Akademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in The Hague from 1905-1908 and a self-portrait from 1909, the first year that he was an independent artist, is in the Museum Prinsenhof, Delft.³

Drawn with softly applied pastel, this drawing stands out for its gripping realism and its immediate impact on its viewer. While the skin is swiftly drawn with parallel strokes, the eye lashes and iris are executed with minute precision. The inscription 'ad. vivum' on the recto of the sheet indicates that it was drawn after life, which could mean that the depicted eye is that of the artist himself. Why there is a number '2' in the iris and the drawing is titled 'Iris Numerata', remains unclear.

The present drawing brings Maurits Cornelis Escher's drawing of his own eye, and the mezzotint after it, to mind.⁴ That drawing, which was executed in September 1946 – just nine months before Houbolt executed this drawing – served as a study for a mezzotint which was made in October 1946.⁵ While it is not known whether Houbolt knew Escher's mezzotint, one wonders whether it could have served as a source of inspiration for Houbolt as the present drawing was executed so soon after Escher's print.



1 P.A. Scheen, *Lexikon Nederlandse Beeldende Kunstenaars 1750-1950, A-L*, The Hague, 1969, p. 515.

2 P.A. Scheen, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

3 inv. PDS 297.

4 See: <https://escherinhetpaleis.nl/over-escher/escher-vandaag/oog> [accessed 12 June 2025].

5 F.H. Bool *et al.*, *Leven en werk van M.C. Escher, Het levensverhaal van de graficus. Met een volledig geïllustreerde catalogus van zijn werk*, Amsterdam, 1981, no. 344, ill., pp. 290-291.