



Vincent van Gogh, *Wheatfield*, June 1888
Oil on canvas, 50 x 61 cm

Two exhibitions at the Fondation Custodia, Paris

Goltzius to Van Gogh
Drawings & Paintings from the P. and N. de Boer Foundation

Between Note and Dream
Works on Paper by Arie Schippers

from 13 December 2014 to 8 March 2015



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For the first time, masterpieces from the Piet de Boer collection will be unveiled to the public at the Fondation Custodia in Paris. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of this little-known foundation, the Fondation Custodia has taken the initiative to show a broad selection from the collection. Underlined by the taste of the dealer and collector Piet de Boer—a contemporary of Frits Lugt (1884-1970), founder of the Fondation Custodia—and his extraordinary feeling for quality, this selection is the harvest of a life devoted to the art market.

A well-known twentieth-century Dutch art dealer, Piet de Boer during his lifetime assembled a significant collection of Flemish and Dutch paintings and drawings of the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. The distinctive taste of Piet de Boer, unbending to the stereotypes of his era, can be discerned in the wealth and diversity of works held by his Foundation. Hendrick Goltzius, Cornelis van Haarlem, Jacques de Gheyn, as well as Vincent van Gogh, are amongst the artists that the public will have the chance to enjoy at 121 rue de Lille in Paris, from 13 December 2014 to 8 March 2015.

A total of 115 paintings and drawings will be presented to art lovers at the Fondation Custodia, with one room devoted to Vincent van Gogh, an artist particularly admired by Piet de Boer. Considering Van Gogh as a “misunderstood hero”, De Boer was sensitive to the painter’s commitment to the farmers’ cause. Three paintings and several drawings by Vincent van Gogh will be exhibited for three months at the Fondation Custodia. Among the paintings is the striking *Wheatfield*, painted in Arles in June 1888. This work’s vibrant colours—its exaggerated yellows and oranges—recur in many of the artist’s paintings produced in Arles and Saint-Rémy during the 1880s.

Another captivating piece that will be shown is Van Gogh’s iconic drawing from 1881, *Worn Out*, portraying a country dweller in the depths of despair. Also on display will be *Le Moulin de Blute-fin*, produced in 1886 during Van Gogh’s time in Paris.

The selection featured in the exhibition has been made by Ger Luijten, director of the Fondation Custodia, and his team. According to Ger Luijten, “*making this selection was a*



source of intense pleasure. Piet de Boer had incredible intuition in terms of artistic taste, and it struck me as interesting to show through the works how, as a result of his choices, Piet de Boer contributed to enlightening his contemporaries in the domain of art from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”

Twenty paintings will be on show, including a number of works by Mannerist artists who, at the time of De Boer's purchases, were not much in vogue. One of these is Hendrick Goltzius with his well-known *Portrait of Jan Govertsz van der Aar as a Collector of Shells* and his *Vanitas Still Life*. A close friend of Goltzius, Jan Govertsz van der Aar posed regularly for the artist and he can be recognised in a number of paintings, variously taking on the roles of Saint Luke, Vulcan or else Triton.

Other paintings in the selection are by Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (*Neptune and Amphitrite*), Cornelis Ketel (a portrait painted “with his fingers, without a brush”, in the words of his contemporary Karel van Mander) and Joachim Wtewael, with his intimate *Mars, Venus and Cupid*.

The exhibition will also feature remarkable still lifes by Balthasar van der Ast, Ambrosius Bosschaert, Gottfried von Wedig and Frans Snijders, atmospheric landscapes by Joos de Momper, Roelant Savery, Hendrick Avercamp and Arent Arentsz Cabel, the magnificent pastose effects of *Open Air Party* by Esaias van de Velde, and the charming still life *Rose, Mouse and Insects* by Jan Brueghel the Elder.

Another notable piece is *Carnations in a Porcelain Vase on a Table* by Balthasar van der Ast, dated 1622. Unlike most still lifes representing flowers from different seasons of the year, this one unites two flower types blooming in the month of May, carnations and forget-me-nots. Here, Van der Ast delighted in arranging his flowers in a Chinese Wanli porcelain vase model that never actually existed.

Among the ninety-five drawings there is a dazzlingly executed *Adoration of the Magi* by the Master of the Liechtenstein Adoration on red prepared paper, Hendrick's Goltzius' intimate *Touch*, and five exemplary drawings by Jacques de Gheyn, among them the perfectly preserved *Heraclitus and Democritus* shown crying and laughing at the world. Mention can also be made of the bloody *Flayed Head of a Calf* using watercolours to highlight the intensity of the red of the blood. Although the latter work dates from 1599—veal's head was a highly appreciated delicacy at the end of the sixteenth century—it is surprising in its modernity.

Less confrontational, but likewise full of references to mortality, is Jacob Hoefnagel's delicate gouache on vellum representing a *Vase of Flowers Surrounded by Fruit and Insects* dated 1629.

From the late 1630s there is Rembrandt's lively sketch of *Joseph Lifted from the Well by his Brothers*, a drawing that the P. & N. de Boer Foundation returned to the heirs of a family that had been looted during the Second World War. It is now in a private collection, but will be on display during the exhibition.

Piet de Boer loved landscapes, from the panoramic to the more intimate, and superb examples can be seen here, including works by eighteenth-century Dutch artists such as Paulus Constantijn la Farge and Jacob Cats. The exhibition will therefore be an opportunity to discover a range of drawings from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries selected from some 400 sheets, many of which have rarely been on display or have never been featured in art-historical literature.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue containing contributions by a number of specialists, each one shedding new light on the chosen works. All works on show will be reproduced in colour, with comparative illustrations. The history of the P. de Boer Gallery and the P. & N. de Boer Foundation will be described in the introduction.



Jacques de Gheyn, *Flayed Head of a Calf*, 1599
Watercolour, 157 x 202 mm



The P. & N. de Boer Foundation

The P. & N. de Boer Foundation was founded by Amsterdam art dealer and collector, Piet de Boer (1896-1974).

Born into a family of Swiss descent that settled in Holland from the seventeenth century onwards, the young Piet did not seem to be naturally predisposed to an artistic career. His father, Dr. Michael Georg de Boer, was a renowned historian. An enthusiastic naturalist, Piet de Boer studied zoology and gathered a considerable collection of beetles that he subsequently bequeathed to the University of Amsterdam. This interest inspired his first purchase: a painting of caterpillars and butterflies by Jan van Kessel that marked the start of his career as an art dealer.

Taking his penchant for art history further, he founded, in 1922, his gallery, the Kunsthandel P. de Boer, whose flourishing business led it to open branches in Germany and to publish catalogues to accompany various themed or monographic exhibitions organised in the Netherlands or abroad.

In 1928, the gallery mounted its first selling exhibition on the Brueghel family and their influence on art in the Netherlands. More pioneering exhibitions were to follow, namely on Joos de Momper and on the flower still life, always accompanied by catalogues written by Piet de Boer, who built up an impressive library and an exhaustive collection of artists' documentation. These exhibitions had art-historical relevance and contributed to a broadening of the taste for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art among collectors and in museums.

The gallery also dealt in drawings, and from the 1930s onwards, Piet de Boer's engagement with modern art saw Kunsthandel P. de Boer's sale of works by contemporary artists including Pyke Koch, Carel Willink and Hildo Krop.

After the Second World War, the firm continued to prosper. Around 1960, after the death of his wife Nellie, Piet withdrew from the business and concentrated on studying and expanding his private collection of paintings and drawings, covering everything from late medieval art to Vincent van Gogh. In 1964, he decided to transfer the collection to the P. & N. de Boer Foundation.



Arie Schippers, *Fable: Cat on Ball*, c. 1998
Watercolour, 46 x 37 cm

Between Note and Dream
Works on Paper by Arie Schippers

from 13 December 2014 to 8 March 2015

Parallel to the exhibition with the treasures from the P. and N. de Boer Foundation that will occupy the first floor of the Fondation Custodia, a second exhibition will take place during the same period, in the building's basement galleries. This latter exhibition will showcase the work on paper of contemporary Dutch artist Arie Schippers.

By staging this exhibition, Ger Luijten, director of the Fondation Custodia, is continuing to follow an active policy of promoting among Parisian art lovers contemporary artists producing significant work on paper. In this way, an exhibition of prints and drawings by Frans Pannekoek was held in 2011, while last year, "Metamorphoses" drawings by Peter Vos were displayed.

Arie Schippers (1952) is undoubtedly one of the most gifted and versatile Dutch artists of the last decades. Trained at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, he won the Prix de Rome in 1977 with a series of paintings of figures in cafés and restaurants. Since then—amongst many other things—he has made a set of sculpted 'imaginary portraits', a large group of figure paintings from his imagination and *plein air* paintings of the Netherlands around the



turn of this century, with service stations, furniture malls and cars that are parked in landscapes like women's shoes kicked off and lying on the floor. What many other artists might think was enough for an entire oeuvre keeps Schippers busy for a couple of years. As a consequence his body of work is made up of many oeuvres—each of them substantial.

Schippers last made the news in 2012, when he completed *Long Walk to Freedom*, a three and a half metre high, full-length bronze statue of Nelson Mandela in a suit, walking. It was unveiled by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Johan de Wittlaan in The Hague. (Schippers had previously made a painted bronze bust of the seventeenth-century politician Johan de Witt.)

He is one of the Netherlands' best artists, but not one of the best known. Perhaps this is because he is a loner, who has neither gallery nor agent and shows no interest in prevailing fashions. Or perhaps it is because he does so many different things it's impossible to get a grip on him. You cannot get what he makes at a glance, his work demands many glances. It is a rich, yet complex oeuvre. It is not easy to convey an image of Arie Schippers.

Nonetheless this winter the Fondation Custodia is going to try, in the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix. When the exhibition of the De Boer Collection opens on the first floor, an exhibition of work by Arie Schippers will open in the basement. The entry into the oeuvre is his work on paper—because he has always drawn, regardless of what else he did.

Schippers's sketchbooks will be displayed in showcases in all the rooms as the backbone to the exhibition. Since his time at the academy he has filled more than a hundred of them and they offer an insight into his mind. On page after page observations are noted, compositions tried out and characters developed. Time after time, as Paul Klee famously put it, *he takes his pencil out for a walk*.

What lies close together in origin, fans out far beyond the sketchbooks. In the seven rooms the exhibition will show how drawing functions for Arie Schippers. Little sketches of the modern landscape become independent line drawings and, when the subject has been sufficiently explored by drawing it, Schippers takes it further in oils. Painted and sculpted portraits are prepared in drawings. Decorative line drawings of paradisiacal animals anticipate the 'fables' that Schippers made in the 1990s, first in watercolours and then as paintings on paper. All the sides, all the wavelengths of his work will be shown in their context with the drawings. The drawings are the linking factor. They reveal, for example, that the—literally—fabulous compositions also provided material for later sculptures, and that in some respects they were the overtures to the large figure paintings that Schippers made in the early 2000s.



His inspiration for these figure works came from Goya's tapestry designs, Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and Gainsborough's portraits-in-the-landscape. *I didn't want to copy those painters literally*, he says, *but to paraphrase them. I wanted to feel in my own hands the problems that faced them*. So Schippers knows his classics, he is very conscious of the long tradition he works in. This is even clear from his drawing style, which can be Ingres-like sharp and linear, sketchy like the Impressionists or elegantly stylized like Matisse or Picasso. And yet a true Schippers always emerges. A good artist can be influenced by others as much as he wants—the result is always something specific to him.

Once you see it in the drawings, you also see it in the rest of Schippers's work: forty years or so of unremitting interaction. Between tradition and innovation. Between observation and fantasy. Every 'on the one hand' is countered by an 'on the other' and Schippers thrives on variety. He can draw breathtakingly good portraits, birds or zoo animals, or foreshortened cars, with or without people loading their shopping into the boot. But, he says, *Working from observation is overestimated. There's a lot against it. Far too much comes at you, and you can never really rein it in. I don't work from observation that much because I can also do it from memory. But I can only do it from memory because when I was at the Rijksakademie I drew from life from nine in the morning until nine at night*.

Fiction and reality are inextricably linked. These days Arie Schippers delights in telling us about the richness of the two and their interrelationship, as many great artists before him also affirmed—from Velázquez to Picasso and from Goltzius to Van Gogh. His drawings deserve the same attention.



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Practical Information:

EXHIBITIONS

Goltzius to Van Gogh. Drawings & Paintings from the P. and N. de Boer Foundation

Between Note and Dream. Works on paper by Arie Schippers

DATES

from 13 December 2014 to 8 March 2015

OPENING

Friday 12 December from 6 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

LOCATION

Fondation Custodia

121, rue de Lille 75007 Paris

www.fondationcustodia.fr

TRANSPORT

Metro stops Assemblée Nationale (line 12) or Invalides (lines 8 and 13, RER C)

Bus stop Assemblée Nationale (lines 63, 73, 83, 84, 94)

OPENING HOURS

All days except Mondays, from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

TICKET PRICES

Full-price 6 € / Reduced-rate 4 €

GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours in the *Goltzius to Van Gogh* exhibition are organized on the following dates: Tuesday 13 January at 11 am – Saturday 24 January at 4 pm – Friday 6 February at 11 am – Saturday 21 February at 4 pm – Friday 6 March at 11 am

Admission: exhibition ticket / Reservations at visites@fondationcustodia.fr

CATALOGUES

Goltzius to Van Gogh. Drawings and Paintings from the P. & N. de Boer Foundation

Fondation Custodia, Paris – THOTH Publishers, Bussum, 2014

277 pp, 24 x 30 cm, ca. 235 pl., hardback

ISBN 978 90 6868 668 5 / Price: 49,50 €

Tussen notitie en droom. Werk op papier van Arie Schippers / Entre notation et rêve. L'œuvre sur papier d'Arie Schippers – Gijsbert van der Wal
Fondation Custodia, Paris – De Weideblik, Varik, 2014

159 pp, 30 x 22,5 cm, ca. 185 pl., hardback

ISBN 978 90 77767 53 5 / Price: 25,00 €

Both catalogues are available at the Fondation Custodia

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Gaëlle de Bernède

gaelledebenede@gmail.com

Tel. : +33 (0)1 75 43 46 80

FOR THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM

Noepy Testa

noepy.testa@gmail.com

TEL. : +31 (0)6 29 14 10 54

DIRECTOR FONDATION CUSTODIA

Ger Luijten

coll.lugt@fondationcustodia.fr

Tel. +33 (0)1 47 05 75 19



Available press images

Goltzius to Van Gogh *Drawings & Paintings from the P. and N. de Boer Foundation*



1. Hendrick Goltzius, *Portrait of Jan Govertsz van der Aar*, 1603
Oil on canvas, 107.5 x 82.7 cm
© Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen,
photo Studio Tromp, Rotterdam



2. Hendrick Avercamp, *Ice Scene*, c. 1610-20
Oil on panel, 15 x 29.5 cm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



3. Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Still Life with a Rose, a Mouse and Insects*
Oil on copper, 8 x 11,5 cm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



4. Master of the Liechtenstein Adoration, *Adoration of the Magi*
Pen and brown ink, brown wash on red paper,
139 x 203 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



5. Dirck de Vries, *Mother with Two Children and Three Maidservants*, 1590
Pen and brown ink, 196 x 139 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



6. Hendrick Goltzius, *Touch*, c. 1595-96
Black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown wash,
heightened with white and red chalk, 159 x 124 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



7. Jacques de Gheyn, *Heracitus and Democritus*
Black chalk, heightened in white, on light brown paper,
237 x 280 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



8. Jacques de Gheyn, *Flayed Head of a Calf*, 1599
Watercolour, 157 x 202 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



9. Jacob Hoefnagel, *Vase of Flowers Surrounded by Fruit and Insects*, 1629
Watercolour, 145 x 191 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



10. Rembrandt, *Joseph Lifted from the Well by his Brothers*, c. 1638
Pen and brown ink, 166 x 135 mm
© Private collection, Amsterdam



11. Joos de Momper, *Mountain Valley*
Pen and ink, brown and blue wash, 244 x 253 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



12. Gerard ter Borch, *Village Scene*
Pen and brown ink, 185 x 286 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



13. Albert Cuyp, *Farmhouses on a Village Street*
Pen and brown ink, watercolour, 175 x 285 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



14. Jacob Cats, *Winter Scene: The Month of December*, 1795
Watercolour, 205 x 280 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



15. Vincent van Gogh, *Worn out*, 1881
Pencil, pen and ink, opaque watercolour, 234 x 312 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



16. Vincent van Gogh, *Le Moulin de Blute-fin*, 1886
Black, blue and red chalk, pen and ink, opaque watercolour, 310 x 240 mm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



17. Vincent van Gogh, *Champ de blé, juin 1888*
Oil on canvas, 50 x 61 cm
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



18. De Boer Gallery and Foundation,
located on Herengracht in Amsterdam
© Fondation P. et N. de Boer, Amsterdam



Available press images

Between Note and Dream *Works on Paper by Arie Schippers*



1. Arie Schippers, *Self-Portrait*, 2008
Watercolour, 24.3 x 25.5 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



2. Arie Schippers, *Sobre Las Doce*, 2001
Oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



3. Arie Schippers, *Red Car Visiting Mitsubishi*, 1997
Oil on panel, 31 x 38 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



4. Arie Schippers, *Diemer Zeedijk*, c. 1992
Graphite, 12.5 x 18 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



5. Arie Schippers, Sketchbook Page:

Jet, c. 1980

Graphite, 12.2 x 21.5 cm

© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



6. Arie Schippers, Sketchbook Page:

Woman with Open Dress, c. 2008

Graphite, 19,5 x 19 cm

© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



7. Arie Schippers, *Jomanda Cast 2*, 2012

Painted bronze, 58 x 25 x 18 cm

© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



8. Arie Schippers, *Fable: Cat on Ball*, c. 1998

Watercolour, 46 x 37 cm

© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



9. Arie Schippers, Sketchbook Page:
Owl and Snake, c. 1997
Graphite, 14.8 x 9.5 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



10. Arie Schippers, *Fable: Owl and Snake*,
c. 1997
Acrylics on paper, 60 x 45 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



11. Arie Schippers, Sketchbook Page:
Paraphrase of Las Meninas, c. 2002
Graphite, 14.8 x 9.5 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam



12. Arie Schippers, Sketchbook Page:
Shopping Trolley, s.a.
Graphite, 20.8 x 26.5 cm
© Arie Schippers, Amsterdam