Yale University Art Gallery
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Front cover: Wallerant Vaillant, Boy with a Flagstaff, (cat. 24).
Opposite: Boy with a Flagstaff, detail

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DARKNESS INTO LIGHT  THE EARLY MEZZOTINT

JANE BAYARD  ELLEN D'OENCH

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY
This exhibition, organized as a project for the graduate seminar in museum training at Yale, is an attempt to give some idea of the energy and diversity of experimentation in mezzotint during the second half of the seventeenth century, in the years just after the technique was invented. Most widely appreciated as a medium for the reproduction of great English portraits by Reynolds, Romney, and Gainsborough, the mezzotint is less well known for its innovative early period on the continent and in London. Due to the temporary presence at the Yale University Art Gallery of an outstanding collection of mezzotints, we were given an unusual opportunity to study and to select from them the greatest portion of our early examples. In 1970, the Yale Center for British Art and British Studies purchased the collection of prints through the generosity of Paul Mellon, B.A. 1929. This exhibition was facilitated by the generous cooperation of Edward Nygren and Nancy Pressly of the British Center. Our gratitude is also extended to the National Endowment for the Arts for their grant to support museum training at Yale on the graduate level. We are especially obliged to James D. Burke, Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, Yale University Art Gallery, for his helpful guidance. Richard S. Field, Curator, Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, kindly gave his advice. We are grateful to Tina Beebe for the design of the catalogue, Howard Gralla for his assistance as production manager, Patrick Curley for his drawings of the mezzotint technique, and Joseph W. Reed and Marilyn Beckhorn for their helpful suggestions. Finally, we are indebted to Alan Shestack, Director, Yale University Art Gallery, for his continuing guidance and support.

JANE BAYARD
ELLEN D’OENCH
The depiction of light and shadow and the expression of atmospheric depth were primary goals of seventeenth-century Dutch painting. Printmakers of the period, especially reproductive engravers, naturally tried to translate these interests into graphic terms. But the vast technical difference between engraving, a linear medium, and painting, a tonal one, made it virtually impossible to satisfactorily transcribe painted images into printed ones. Only a few original artists such as Rembrandt were capable of using etching and drypoint to achieve dramatic chiaroscuro and brilliant tonal effects. The majority of printmakers however, were not attempting to create original works of art: their aim was to make engraved equivalents of significant paintings. Clearly, there was a need for a graphic process independent of line which could accurately reproduce the fine shades and rich textures of oil on canvas.

In 1642, Ludwig von Siegen, a soldier in the service of William VI, Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, produced the first mezzotint, a portrait of his patron’s mother, Amelia Elizabeth (cat. 1, pl. 3). In it, he was able to build up delicate gradations of tone and shadow in a totally new manner. Von Siegen sent his print to the Landgrave with an explanatory letter that ends, “if in some parts this work seems to be done in hatching, it is notwithstanding, entirely dotted.” To create these small dots which make up his figure, von Siegen invented the roulette (fig. 2), a toothed instrument which he handled in the same way a pen or pencil is used, building up tones and working from light to dark. Although his invention led directly to the development of mezzotint, von Siegen’s method was quite different from the first detailed account of the process, published in 1669 by Alexander Browne in his Ars Pictoria. Here, new instruments were described and von Siegen’s additive process was reversed. The artist began by laying a uniformly dark surface on the plate with a rocker, and then scraped away that surface to obtain modulated light areas.

It was impossible to identify with certainty the person responsible for this development and for the invention of the rocker, until the publication in 1960 by Orovida Pissarro of an extract from one of the Evelyn manuscripts on deposit at Christ Church, Oxford. John Evelyn, in his history of engraving on copper plates, Sculptura, made the first published reference to mezzotint, giving credit for its invention to Prince Rupert of Bohemia, Count Palatine. In his short chapter on mezzotint, Evelyn did not explain the technique, but he announced his intention of fully describing the instruments and process in a paper to be given to the Royal Society. This essay never reached its destination; instead, it remained in draft form among his papers. In the manuscript, published in part by Miss Pissarro, Evelyn gave a full account of the mezzotint process, and illustrated both the “hatcher” (or rocker) and the “style” (a combination scraper and burnisher). At the end of his paper,
Evelyn again cited Prince Rupert as the inventor of the method, but also added, "He told me it was the devise of a common soouldier [sic] in Germany." Thus Evelyn was aware of von Siegen's connection with mezzotint, but did not realize that he had invented only the roulette.

Evelyn’s account proves that Rupert was responsible for the development of the rocker. Miss Pissarro also quotes from Rupert’s correspondence to explain how he learned of von Siegen’s roulette. In 1657, Rupert visited his cousin the Landgrave William VI at Cassel. Both men were dilettantes in a number of fields—mechanics and engraving, among others—and it was here that Rupert first saw von Siegen’s work. Returning to Frankfurt in the same year, he began to experiment with the process, hiring Wallerant Vaillant, a portrait painter, to assist him. Some of his attempts, such as the Bust of a Woman Looking Down (cat. 11), show von Siegen’s influence in the delicate yet sporadic use of the roulette. However, The Great Executioner (cat. 3, pl. 4) illustrates a dramatic change in intent and technique. The print’s large size "shows that from the earliest years of its use the mezzotint technique was considered capable of producing copies of paintings which were suitable for framing." Rupert’s major concern in The Great Executioner was to create a regular ground on which his design could be scraped. He continued to search for a method until he was able to produce a plate like the Old Man (cat. 12). The answer, which he communicated to Evelyn in 1661, was the development of the mezzotint rocker.

Rupert’s fluctuating style makes it difficult to assess his artistic rôle in the development of mezzotint. This is partly due to his experiments with various instruments, but also because he employed an assistant. The question of how much credit is due to Vaillant and how much to Rupert is one which is not yet resolved. However, on the evidence of the prints, it would seem that Vaillant’s contribution was considerable. A comparison of the St. Mary Magdalene (cat. 9) and The Standard Bearer (cat. 6, pl. 5) proves this. In the first print, which was done before Vaillant had become Rupert’s assistant, the work is coarse and haphazard, and the drawing is often faulty, especially in the neck and fingers. Contrasting with this is The Standard Bearer, which was executed after Vaillant had joined Rupert. The print is a strong, highly finished work in which the fine shadows on the face play against the deep velvety black of the background.

Wallerant Vaillant was the first professional artist to work extensively in mezzotint. He executed over 200 plates, and did much to popularize and disseminate the technique. A large portion of his work, especially in portraiture, was not based on painted prototypes, but was entirely original, as for example Prince Rupert (cat. 20), his wife Maria Vaillant (cat. 23), and his own Self Portrait (cat. 21). Vaillant also did a number of mezzotints after Italian and Dutch paintings. His Jonah Escaping from the Mouth of the Whale (cat. 25), after
Pieter Lastman, is characterized by strong contrasts of light and shade, which complement the striking subject.

At the time Vaillant and Rupert were working in Frankfurt, several other artists and amateurs were experimenting with the mezzotint technique. There is little evidence about how most of them learned it. Some, like Nathaniel Schroeder of Danzig, were self taught, but stylistic evidence usually points either to von Siegen or to Rupert as the source of technical information. Jan Thomas, court painter to the emperor in Vienna, probably learned the mezzotint process from Rupert. Thomas was in Frankfurt in 1658, and his first plate, Pro Deo et Patria, was completed within the same year. Like Rupert, Thomas' style vacillates between dry literal work with the roulette as in his St. Carlo Borromeo (cat. 16), and a richer, more painterly technique seen in his portrait of Titian (cat. 15). In all, Thomas did only about fifteen mezzotints. Theodore Caspar von Fürstenberg, a canon of Mainz, was an amateur who, like Thomas, executed only a few plates. He probably learned mezzotint from von Siegen, who is known to have served the elector of Mainz around 1654. This can be deduced from his first work, which is dated 1656, one year before Rupert began his experiments. This print, a portrait of Leopold William, Archduke of Austria (cat. 17), is remarkably close in style to von Siegen's Amelia Elizabeth (cat. 1). In his later plates, von Fürstenberg seems to have been aware of Rupert's work. The Great Executioner may have suggested von Fürstenberg's Head of St. John the Baptist on a Charger (cat. 25), and it contains indications of rocker work. This is also true of the Christ Crowned with Thorns (cat. 19), although both contain more roulette than rocker work.

In the 1660's, Amsterdam became the most active center for mezzotint. Vaillant, settling there in 1662, probably was responsible for this development. His most important follower was Abraham Blooteling, whose earliest dated work was the Erasmus (cat. 26) of 1671. This print may have been executed under the direction of Vaillant, who had already engraved the same subject. Blooteling was responsible for another major advance in the mezzotint process: he was the first to rock his plate a deep and uniform black before starting his design. Although both Rupert and Vaillant had grounded their plates, they never achieved the thick and regular burr of Blooteling's more fully rocked plates. Blooteling's work was seminal. Not only was his large oeuvre of over 128 prints well known, but it also became the standard of excellence for all artists working in mezzotint. The Temptation of St. Anthony (cat. 27, pl. 6), demonstrates the even richness of tone obtainable only through a complete grounding of the plate. Around 1672, Blooteling and his assistant Gerard Valck travelled to England, where they remained until 1675. Their work gave great impetus and direction to the early English school. Many Dutch printmakers followed this path—Paul van
Somer and Jan Verkolje, among others—and mezzotints of Dutch genre scenes, sporting pictures, and still lifes were popular enough in London to warrant their export from Amsterdam.

Because of its potential for high tonal contrasts, mezzotint became an increasingly common way of depicting artificially lit scenes. Blooteling’s explorations in this area had shown the mezzotint’s capabilities for suggesting dramatic mood, as in *St. Paul* (cat. 28) after Van Dyck. Both Paul and Jan van Somer exploited this further, playing deep shadows off against strong highlights. In Paul van Somer’s *The Dentist* (cat. 34), this was taken to an extreme, producing an amusing, yet irrational and disturbing scene. Other artists such as Jacob Gole used chiaroscuro to obtain decorative harmony, as in his little *Still Life with Fish and Poultry* (cat. 35). Isaac Beckett’s mezzotints attest to the popularity of these Dutch subjects in England. He produced a number of plates after Egbert Heemskerck, for example *Marriage and Confession* (cat. 37), as well as portraits after Lely and Kneller. Beckett was strongly influenced by Blooteling’s work, and was one of the first English artists to devote most of his talent to mezzotint.

Native English artists worked under a disadvantage during the seventeenth century. Their training was inadequate unless they had studied on the continent, and they had to compete with Dutch and Flemish rivals who were far more highly regarded by English patrons. It is no wonder that many early mezzotints in England are indistinguishable from their Dutch counterparts. Free from the dictates of patronage, a few amateurs like William Sherwin and Francis Place were able to choose their own style. Sherwin produced the first dated English mezzotint, a portrait of Charles II, in 1669. It was dedicated to Rupert, whom Sherwin probably had met through his great-uncle by marriage, the Duke of Albemarle. Sherwin’s portrait of the Duke (cat. 38), like Rupert’s early prints, is erratically rocked and unburnished. The unfinished quality of the background, and the sketchily outlined lettering on the pedestal lead us to believe that the print is a trial proof. Francis Place, better known for his landscape drawings and etchings, also executed twenty-three mezzotints. Most were original portraits of his friends, as for example *William Lodge* (cat. 40), but he also did mezzotints after Italian and Dutch artists. Stylistically, Place was smoother and more elegant than many of his contemporaries, prefiguring the work of John Smith and other early eighteenth-century masters. The work of William Faithorne, son of the famous line engraver, was almost entirely in mezzotint, reflecting the growing popularity of the technique in England during the 1680’s. Most writers have cited a tradition that Faithorne led a dissipated life, thus explaining the weakness in some of his work. This weakness is certainly not apparent in his *Time, Glory, and Death* (cat. 39, pl. 8), in which tonal contrasts and the black ground reinforce the symbolism of the design.
By the end of the 1680’s, mezzotint was established in England. Because of the tonal range and softness of the process, engravers increasingly turned to mezzotint to make copies of portraits by Lely, Kneller, and others. The great popularity of these reproductive prints soon overshadowed the value of mezzotint as an original method. Artists as well as printsellers soon realized the economic possibilities of the technique. For this reason, Kneller employed John Smith, who executed more than 138 plates after his work. Smith was the finest and most prolific artist in mezzotint at the turn of the century, and his style foreshadowed developments of such great eighteenth-century figures as James MacArdell, Valentine Green and John Raphael Smith. Both in spirit and technical virtuosity, Smith’s Miss Voss (cat. 42, pl. 9) has surpassed earlier mezzotints. Smith’s work demonstrates the final step in the evolution of the seventeenth-century mezzotint. Experiment with process was no longer a vital concern—above all, sophistication and polish were the qualities to be sought after. With Smith’s work, the mezzotint had come of age.

JANE BAYARD

1 Quoted in Pissarro, p. 2.
2 Pissarro, p. 5.
3 Quoted in Ittmann, p. 22.
This exhibition, representing the earliest years of mezzotint, focuses on a period of intense technical experimentation. For the seventeenth-century printmaker who wished to call on a full range of pictorial effects, the means at hand were not always sufficiently flexible. With what process could he perfect a method of reproducing the brushwork, shadows, and, above all, the subtle variations of tone available to the painter?

With the exception of a few artists working with color in chiaroscuro woodblock prints, the traditional method of printmaking was the engraving or etching of line. To engrave, the artist draws his image by pushing his graving tool, or burin, along the surface of a copper plate, leaving a V-shaped incision (fig. 1a). The plate is then inked and wiped so that the ink remains only in the lines. When paper is pressed onto its surface, the plate yields up the inked image in the pattern of lines originally drawn by the artist. Etching allows the artist to draw with less effort. The artist first coats his plate with an acid resistant gum or resin ground. He draws through this more agreeable surface with his needle, exposing the copper underneath. The plate is then bathed in acid which eats down through the exposed lines but leaves the rest of the plate untouched. When the ground is removed, the result is a plate bitten with slightly undercut lines (fig. 1b). It is then printed in the same manner as the engraving, both processes being termed “intaglio” as opposed to the “relief” impressions gained from the raised lines of a woodblock. While the artist could sometimes achieve a tone by leaving a thin wash of ink on portions of his plate, the usual method of modeling forms or creating shadows was by careful and time-consuming cross-hatching. It was difficult to recreate the illusion of paint with these techniques. Thus, von Siegen’s invention, which was tonal rather than linear, caught the printmaker’s imagination. His successors reversed the intaglio process of working from light to dark, and within twenty-five years established pure mezzotint as the leading reproductive medium.

In the mezzotint process, the artist works from dark to light. First the plate is thoroughly roughened all over its surface, raising a prickly copper burr above its original plane. If the plate were to be printed at this stage, its thick and rug-like pile, capable of holding a quantity of ink, would produce a rich and uniform black impression. The artist draws his image on the ground with chalk (or occasionally etches it), and then uses a scraper, shaped like a lancet and sharpened on both sides, to cut away the “pile.” As if hollowing out his shapes, he reduces the ground in areas where he wishes to model more light. A blunt burnishing tool helps him to cut below the surface of the plate to create the whitest highlights. A highly schematic cross-section of a worked mezzotint plate illustrates an example which would print from the darkest to the lightest tones (fig. 1c). Since the surface of the plate is fragile, only the first fifteen to twenty impressions retain their velvety deep blacks.
1a Engraving the plate with a burin

1b Cross-section of the etched line

1c Schematic cross-section of a grounded and scraped mezzotint plate. To the right, the burr raised above the surface of the plate by the indentations of the rocker will print the darkest tone. The scraper removes the burr where lighter tones are desired. The depressed area on the left will print highlights.

2 The roulette

3 The rocker
The major problem for the graphic innovators was posed by the ground. How could the artist treat the surface of the plate so that it would print a uniform tone? Many of the first twenty mezzotints in this exhibition reflect the deficiencies of von Siegen’s roulette. The instrument, shaped somewhat like a miniature pie-crust cutter, has small sharp teeth around the perimeter of its wheel (fig. 2). When rolled across the plate, the roulette leaves dotted puncture marks instead of lines. But it can not be readily sharpened and, unless wielded with skill or used only as a contour-shaping device in localized areas, it is apt to leave a thin and gritty texture on the impression. The best example of this is seen in the Man Looking into a Mirror, by an unknown artist (cat. 13, pl. 2), whose clear intention to create a dramatic dark ground was frustrated by the monotonous handling and dullness of his instrument. A more effective tool was needed.

It was Prince Rupert, the ingenious amateur, who conceived of the idea of the rocker, still in use today as the mezzotint’s primary instrument. John Evelyn’s Oxford manuscript, discussed by Jane Bayard in her essay on the history of the mezzotint, includes a sketch of the tool as well as a detailed account of Rupert’s method. The rocker, or “hatcher” as Rupert called it, is a chisel-shaped instrument with minute grooves running down its face terminating in a curved row of teeth (fig. 3). The cutting edge is about 1¼ to 1¾ inches wide and the number of teeth varies from sixty to one hundred to the inch, according to the desired fineness of grain. It could be easily sharpened by grinding down the bevelled end. Evelyn describes the handling of the rocker:

Lay the plate (of w't size you think fitt) upon some even table, and with your Hatcher, the assistance of y' hand, and (if neede be) y' breast, presse it on the plate with so much force as is convenient to make it leave a sufficient marke; and this being begun at one of the sides of the plate, passe it to the other with a wriggling; but uniforme motion and force; remembering to get the radiated flat of y' instru-

With a diagram showing the V-shaped tracks left by the rocker, Evelyn demonstrates the methodical scarifying of the plate lengthwise, crosswise, and diagonally so that no portion is left untouched and so that it will print “exceedingly black.” Later mezzotinters were to mathematically calculate the course of the rocker to cover the plate in as many as seventy-two changes of direction.

There is no written record of the technique used by the mezzotinters before they began to systematically ground the plate with the rocker. The works themselves are our only evidence. Prince Rupert’s Great Executioner (cat. 3, pl. 4), one of the marvels of seventeenth-century printmaking, is a
fascinating and baffling work. Rupert is thought to have mounted a roulette on the end of a long pole whose far end was attached to a pivot. By swinging the pole-roulette around the rim of a metal semi-circular form, he cut curved lines into the surface. After each incision, the guide was moved inward a fraction of an inch from the corner of the plate and another swing was made with the roulette. After working the plate from the bottom left corner, he (or his assistant) turned it and worked it from the top left. Thus the circles overlap. Was his instrument a new form of roulette? Commentators have speculated about the tool since the lines of the ground are without the characteristic dots or dashes left by the toothed wheel and create a unique silky texture. While heavy pressure on the roulette may have caused the continuous line, it is possible that Rupert used a knife-edged rolling implement. He then worked his composition on top of this ground, perhaps using the rocker in the darkest areas, and burnished for his highlights. It may not have been Rupert’s intention, but the powerful drama of the print is partially a result of the pull between the dark and heavy three-dimensionality of the executioner and the graceful surface patterning of the wheeling lines.

Occasionally, as in the Head of the Executioner (cat. 4), he mixed methods using etching or drypoint lines to sharpen some areas of his prints. Or, as in the Bust of a Woman Looking Down (cat. 11) he washed a tone of ink over parts of the plate to soften the modeling. His use of the roulette in St. Mary Magdalene (cat. 9), and The Standard Bearer (cat. 5, pl. 5) is both energetic and impressionistic as it explores textures, contours form, and digs deeply into the plate for expressive areas of black. In only a few cases can we trace his use of the rocker, usually in light areas which are always the most revealing of process. The upper left side of the Head of the Executioner (cat. 4) includes some strips of V-shaped patches which could not have been created by a roulette. The Head of the Old Man (cat. 12) was entirely grounded with the parallel and widely spaced diagonals of a rocker. Its highlights and half-tones are scraped and burnished. In this print, Rupert has fully developed his mezzotint technique.

Other amateurs working in the 1650’s experimented with the mezzotint without advancing Rupert’s innovations. Nor did they share his sensitivity as the interpreter of the works of others. Thomas and von Fürstenberg did not completely ground their plates and worked almost entirely with the roulette. They employed various sizes of grain with the fine-toothed wheel in the St. Carlo Borromeo (cat. 16) to a more coarsely serrated version in the Head of St. John the Baptist on a Charger (cat. 17). However, a close examination of the lighter areas of Christ Crowned with Thorns (cat. 19) indicates that von Fürstenberg was familiar with the rocker. An oddity in this exhibition was executed by an amateur who used neither the rocker nor the roulette to shade his background. Schroeder’s Self Portrait (cat. 14), like several other
mezzotints in the early years, is an experiment in grounding the plate with a small rat-tail file. The implement is pressed down with a heavy board and rolled back and forth across the plate, roughening it in a short time. But the file soon loses its sharpness and produces an unpleasantly gritty print.

With Vaillant, Blooteling, and their successors, the making of mezzotints became a full-fledged profession. An enlarged detail of Vaillant’s *Boy with a Flagstaff* (cat. 24, pl. 1) illustrates both the extreme smoothness with which the plate was grounded and the artist’s careful manipulation of the scraper in shaping the rounded forms and different textures of hair, skin, and background tone. The traces of the tool are still evident. As with Jan van Somer’s *Story of the Soldier*, (cat. 31, pl. 7), the grounding lines are too widely spaced so that when they are scraped back they give the print an all-over appearance of being printed on linen. This warp-and-woof texture is especially apparent in Place’s *William Lodge* (cat. 40). Valliant’s later plates, and Blooteling’s minutely grounded prints with their consistent and uniform treatment of tone, were to become the standard.

Dutch and English artists in mezzotint, such as Gole, Paul van Somer, Beckett, and Smith, now possessed increasingly perfected tools and techniques. Most of them, as well as those in succeeding generations, can be recognized for their individual characteristics of style, preference for fine or coarse grounds, and greater or lesser ability to shape forms from the tonal gradations of ink. But after the late seventeenth century, it is no longer possible to trace the evidence of accident or trial in the printmaker’s search for a new expression. Process was now brought to the point of invisibility.

ELLEN D’OENCH

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1 Quoted in Pissarro, p. 4.
2 Anonymous
Man Looking into a Mirror, after Ribera
cat. 13
Andresen
Andreas Andresen, Der Deutsch Peindre-Graveur, 5 vols., V, Leipzig, 1864–78.


John Evelyn, Sculptura; or the History of the Art of Chalcography, London, 1662.


Hake

Hind 1963

Hind 1933

Hollstein

Ittmann


Nagler


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All prints in this exhibition are loans from the Yale Center for British Art and British Studies, Paul Mellon Fund, unless otherwise noted. Measurements are taken from the plate; height precedes width.

**LUDWIG VON SIEGEN**
Active in Cassel, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, 1609–1680?

1 *Amelia Elizabeth, Landgravine of Hesse*, 1643
429 x 328 mm.
Smith 1; Andresen 1; Nagler 1; second state of two

This is the earliest known mezzotint. Von Siegen wrote to William VI of Hesse-Cassel about his discovery: "There is not a single engraver . . . who can account for, or guess how this work is done . . . ." It differed from any other known technique "... although one only notices small dots and not a single line; if in some parts this work seems to have been done in hatching, it is notwithstanding, entirely dotted." (Quoted in Pissarro, p. 2).

2 *Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia*, after G. van Honthorst, 1643
513 x 417 mm.
Smith 2; Andresen 2; Nagler 2; state uncertain

The print portrays the only sister of Charles I of England. Her third son, Prince Rupert, was distinguished both as a commander in Charles' army and as an innovator in early mezzotint.

**PRINCE RUPERT**
Active in Cassel, Brussels, Frankfurt, London, 1619–1682

3 *The Great Executioner*, after Ribera School, 1658
635 x 443 mm.
Smith 2; Hind 1933, 3; Andresen 6; Nagler 6; second state of two

A powerful psychological study, the print captures the tragic awareness of the executioner as he holds aloft the head of his victim, St. John the Baptist. Rupert's work is a bold experiment in technique and one of the greatest mezzotints of the seventeenth century.
Amelia Elisabetha, d.g. Hassiae Landgravia etc.,
comitissa Hanoviae Montzenb.
4  *Head of the Executioner*, after Ribera School, 1662
132 × 165 mm.
Smith 7; Hind 1933, 7; Andresen 7; Nagler 7; only state
Bibliography: Hind 1963, p. 262.
Lent by the Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University

The print is a replica of the head of *The Great Executioner*, and was made as a frontispiece for John Evelyn's *Sculptura*, 1662. In the chapter on mezzotint, Evelyn wrote: "His Highness did indulge me the liberty of publishing the whole manner and address of the new way of engraving. . . . But when I had well considered it . . . I did not think it necessary, that an art so curious, and (as yet) so little vulgar . . . was to be prostituted at so cheap a rate, as the more naked describing of it here would too soon have exposed it to." (Quoted in Pissarro, p. 1).

5  *Head of the Executioner*, after Ribera School, 1662
132 × 165 mm.
Yale University Art Gallery

The Yale print is darker and slightly less clear than cat. 4. No two impressions of a mezzotint are exactly alike. Because the delicate burr on a plate is quickly worn away, the printer often inks the plate more heavily in later impressions to compensate for the loss in quality of tone.

6  *The Standard Bearer*, after P. della Vecchia, 1658
278 × 197 mm.
Smith 5; Hind 1933, 4; Andresen 8; Nagler 5; first state of two or three

Although inscribed "Giorgio" (Giorgione) in the upper right corner, the print is actually after a painting by Pietro della Vecchia, a seventeenth-century artist whose work, even during his lifetime, was often falsely ascribed to earlier masters.

7  *Head of the Standard Bearer*, after P. della Vecchia, 1658
183 × 164 mm.
Smith 6; Hind 1933, 16; Andresen 9; only state
Bibliography: Russell 1926, p. 487.

This print is closer to the painted original which represents the subject wearing chain mail instead of a slashed doublet.
Prince Rupert
The Great Executioner, 1658, after Ribera School
cat. 3
8  **Bust of a Young Man**  
180 × 139 mm.  
State uncertain  
A weak impression with grayed tonal contrasts. The print is not listed among Rupert's nineteen known works.

9  **St. Mary Magdalene, after M. Merian**  
228 × 168 mm.  
Smith 3; Russell 1926, 3; Hind 1933, 9; Andresen 5; Nagler 4; only state  
Bibliography: Hind 1963, p. 263.  
This print is one of Rupert's earliest essays in the new method. It mixes roulette work with some etched line, not yet employing the rocker or scraper.

10  **St. Mary Magdalene, after M. Merian**  
227 × 168 mm.  
In adding more ink to this later impression of cat. 9, the printer strengthened the print but also changed the Magdalene from a blonde to a brunette.

11  **Bust of a Woman Looking Down, after Titian (?)**  
152 × 185 mm.  
Smith 12; Hind 1933, 12; Andresen 12; only state  
The only other known impressions of this extremely rare print are in London and Berlin. It reproduces in reverse the figure of the *Woman Taken in Adultery*, attributed to Titian. The soft tonality is offset by delicate drypoint lines around the bodice, hair, and turban.

12  **Old Man**  
124 × 124 mm.  
Smith 4; Hind 1933, 10; Andresen 14; Nagler 14; only state  
Rupert used only the rocker and scraper in this print, one of the earliest examples of pure mezzotint.

ANONYMOUS  
German (?)  

13  **Man Looking into a Mirror, after Ribera**  
378 × 289 mm.  
Prince Rupert
*The Standard Bearer*, 1658, after P. della Vecchia
cat. 6
Although the figure turns his back on the viewer, the mirror reflects a disturbing image of his scarred and anxious face. The print records a lost work, the *Sense of Sight* from the series of *Five Senses* painted by Ribera.

**NATHANIEL SCHROEDER**  
Active in Danzig, 1630–1685

14 **Self Portrait**  
108 × 91 mm.  
Only state known  
Bibliography: Nagler, XVIII, p. 2.

Schroeder was an amateur whose work is of interest only because it is so early, dating from around 1660–1670. Examination of this print suggests that he pressed a circular file over the plate to achieve a ground. Perhaps, having seen a mezzotint by von Siegen or Rupert, he tried to recreate the new method himself.

**JAN THOMAS**  
Active in Vienna, Frankfurt, 1610–1672

15 **Titian, after Titian’s Self Portrait, 1661**  
314 × 242 mm.  
Smith 5; Nagler 12; only state  

One of only twelve to fifteen mezzotints by Thomas, the print reveals his considerable ability to combine etched line with subtle gradations of tone and texture.

16 **St. Carlo Borromeo, after A.G. Figino**  
238 × 158 mm.  
Smith 7; Nagler 11; only state  

St. Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), Archbishop of Milan, played a leading role in support of papal authority at the Council of Trent. He founded schools, seminaries, and libraries in Italy and Switzerland and was canonized in 1610. Thomas' treatment of the halo, with its odd resemblance to a spiraling thumb-tack, is similar to those depicted in von Fürstenberg’s prints (cats. 18 and 19).

**THEODORE CASPAR VON FÜRSTENBERG**  
Active in Mainz, 1615–1675
17 *Leopold William, Archduke of Austria, 1656*

144 x 116 mm.
Smith 4; Andresen 1; Nagler, IV, pp. 523-4; only state

Von Fürstenberg, Canon of Mainz, was an amateur like his teacher von Siegen. In this delicate print, he used the etching needle to clarify details and further mixed his media by engraving the lines outside the oval.

18 *Head of St. John the Baptist on a Charger*

359 x 460 mm.
Smith 1; Andresen 7; Nagler, IV, pp. 523-4; only state

The drama of the print is intensified by its close-up view of the grisly subject, the strong diagonal placement of the head, and the somewhat crude contrasts of light and dark. Rupert’s *Great Executioner* may have suggested the theme.

19 *Head of Christ Crowned with Thorns*

212 x 150 mm.
Smith 5; Andresen 6; second state of two
Bibliography: Hind 1963, p. 263.

Von Fürstenberg based his composition on Dürer’s *Ecce Homo* then in Mainz. In 1659, another print after the same subject was executed by Caspar Dooms. These two mezzotints are the only record of Dürer’s painting, which is now lost.

WALLERANT VAILLANT
Active in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, London, 1623–1677

20 *Prince Rupert in Armor, ca. 1658*

260 x 178 mm.
Wessely 56; Nagler 18; only state

In portraying his teacher, Vaillant reflects a contemporary description of Prince Rupert’s appearance: “He was tall and always had a forbidding look . . . his expression was harsh and cold even though he tried to soften it.” (Quoted in Hind 1933, p. 382).

21 *Portrait of the Artist Wearing a Hat*

454 x 173 mm.
Wessely 3; Nagler 9; only state
Vaillant was the first professional artist to fully explore the potential of the mezzotint as an inventive as well as reproductive technique. This extremely rare print is one of three self-portraits.

22 Young Man with a Statue of Cupid  
276 × 214 mm.  
Wessely 21; Nagler 80  
Yale University Art Gallery  
Everett V. Meeks, B.A. 1901, Fund  
The print is believed to be a portrait of Vaillant’s brother Andreas, a lesser-known artist. Many of Vaillant’s original compositions were studies of his family and are among the most appealing and intimate works in mezzotint.

23 Maria Vaillant, the Artist’s Wife  
198 × 171 mm.  
Wessely 7; Nagler 13; second state of two  
This charming portrait was published by Abraham Blooteling, Vaillant’s student and friend.

24 Boy with a Flagstaff  
265 × 196 mm.  
Wessely 142; Nagler 97; first state of two  

25 Jonah Escaping from the Mouth of the Whale, after P. Lastman  
289 × 378 mm.  
Wessely 77; Nagler 59; only state  
The startling image has precedents in the work of Dutch Italianate artists such as Paul Bril, and also in medieval manuscript illuminations. Vaillant’s print reverses Pieter Lastman’s composition of 1621.

ABRAHAM BLOOTELING  
Active in Amsterdam, London, 1640–1690

26 Erasmus, after H. Holbein, the Younger, 1671  
127 × 93 mm.  
Wessely 14; Nagler, I, p. 544; Hollstein 158; second state of two  
Bibliography: Hind 1963, p. 266.  
Yale University Art Gallery  
Library transfer, Gift of John Hay Whitney  
Blooteling’s first dated mezzotint reproduces one of the nine portraits of the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1467–1536), executed by Hans Holbein. Numerous copies of Holbein’s work were also made by other artists.
Abraham Blooteling
The Temptation of St. Anthony, after C. Procaccini
Cat. 27
27 *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, after C. Procaccini
371 × 230 mm.
Wessely 68; Hollstein 219; second state of two
The artist set a new standard of excellence for the mezzotint process. He was the first to fully ground the plate with the rocker so that it printed a uniform black. This enabled him to achieve consistent and strong dramatic contrasts using only the scraper and burnisher.

28 *St. Paul*, after A. van Dyck
356 × 276 mm.
Wessely 65; Hollstein 216; first state of two
Although Van Dyck died one year before the invention of mezzotint, a number of artists copied his work. Blooteling’s version captures the nervous intensity and unearthly light of the original.

29 *Henricus van Born*, after J. Maes
314 × 222 mm.
Wessely 5; Hollstein 149; second state of two
 Probably executed after Blooteling’s return to Amsterdam in 1675, the print is a fine example of formal portraiture and indicates later developments in the tonal enrichment of the mezzotint in England.

KAREL DUJARDIN
Dutch, 1622–1678

30 *The Story of the Soldier*
895 × 800 mm. (35 ¼ × 31½ in.)
Oil on canvas
Yale University Art Gallery
Leonard C. Hanna Jr., B.A. 1913, Fund
The capacity of the mezzotint to imitate subtle gradations of paint may be seen in the comparison of this work with its reproduction by Jan van Somer (cat. 31). Dujardin’s painting depicts a wounded soldier recounting his exploits to a boy. The other soldier reacts to his exaggerated tale by making a gesture to the viewer as if to say “My eye!”

JAN VAN SOMER
Active in Amsterdam, 1645?–after 1699

31 *The Story of the Soldier*, after Karel Dujardin
286 × 327 mm.
Nagler 29; only state
Jan van Somer
*The Story of the Soldier, after K. Dujardin*
cat. 31
JAN VERKOLJE
Active in Delft, Amsterdam, 1650–1693

32 Running Dog
98 × 108 mm.
Nagler 33; only state
During the seventeenth century, sporting pictures and depictions of animals were popular in the Low Countries and England. Abraham Hondius, Melchior Hondecoeter, Francis Barlow, and other artists specialized in similar scenes.

33 Sleeping Dog
111 × 98 mm.
Nagler 31; only state

PAUL VAN SOMER
Active in Amsterdam, London, ca 1649–ca 1694

34 The Dentist
272 × 199 mm.
State uncertain
The subject, a popular one with a number of Dutch artists, is possibly taken from contemporary stage comedy. It is also used as an emblem of the sense of feeling in several print series, such as Jan Both's Five Senses after Andries Both. The technique, involving very black areas and contrasting flickering white highlights, is influenced by the candlelit scenes of the Utrecht followers of Caravaggio.

JACOB GOLE
Active in Amsterdam, London, 1660–1737?

35 Still Life with Fish and Poultry
255 × 184 mm.
Nagler, V, p. 230; Hollstein, VII, p. 240; only state
Gole, who often worked in conjunction with his teacher Cornelis Dusart, produced almost 300 mezzotints. Like Blooteling, he worked in London, thus helping to establish the art in England.
What's Humane Life, where nothing long can stand?

Time flies, Our Glory fades & Death's at hand.

P. Champaigne pinx:
W. Faithorne iun. fec.
ISAAC BECKETT
Active in London, 1653– ca. 1715

36 The Confession, after Moroone (?)  
264 × 203 mm.  
Nagler, I, p. 361; state uncertain  

The number of erotic subjects engraved in the seventeenth century is evidence that there was a large market for prints such as this one. Priests were fair game for English satirists during the 1680's, when anti-Catholic sentiment was strong. The print of the repentant monk on the wall prefigures Hogarth’s narrative commentaries.  

37 Marriage and Confession, after E. Heemskerck  
267 × 191 mm.  
State uncertain  

Beckett was one of the founders of the British School of mezzotint. He produced many genre scenes after Egbert Heemskerck, reflecting the English taste for Dutch art. His pupil, John Smith (cat. 42), was the most important and prolific artist in mezzotint of the early eighteenth century.  

WILLIAM SHERWIN
Active in London, fl. 1669–1714  

38 George, Duke of Albemarle  
395 × 313 mm.  
Smith 2; Nagler 2; Russell 1926, 2a; second state of two  

George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, was related to Sherwin by marriage. It was probably through him that Sherwin was introduced to Rupert, whose influence can be seen in this trial proof. Sherwin’s Charles II, 1669, is the earliest dated mezzotint by an Englishman.  

WILLIAM FAITHORNE, THE YOUNGER
Active in London, 1656–1701  

39 Time, Glory, and Death, after P. Champaigne  
163 × 175 mm.  
State uncertain  

The death’s head or vanitas was a popular subject throughout the seventeenth century, warning the viewer of the transitory nature of life. The subject is an ironic one for Faithorne who is said to have died from the effects of dissipation.
Devotion in such looks does gracefull shine,
And forces us to own her pow'rs divine.
FRANCIS PLACE
Active in York, London, 1647–1728

40 William Lodge
158 × 126 mm.
Smith 7; Hake 210; only state

Many of Place’s mezzotints were portraits of his personal friends, such as this rare print of a fellow artist from York. The two men were once arrested as Jesuit spies while on a fishing trip in Wales.

41 Richard Thompson, Printseller, after G. Zoust
266 × 209 mm.
Smith 13; Hake 216; Nagler 1; third state of three
Bibliography: Hind 1963, p. 267; Russell 1929, p. 68; Rostenberg, p. 52.

Place executed the print sometime before 1693, but it was re-worked at a later date by John Smith. This explains its elegance and high finish, which is close in feeling to eighteenth-century technique. Thompson was a leading dealer in the sale of mezzotints and published Browne’s Ars Pictoria in 1669.

JOHN SMITH
Active in London, ca 1654–ca 1720

42 Miss Voss, after G. Kneller, 1705
455 × 350 mm.
Smith 261; second state of three

Smith, one of Kneller’s chief assistants and his principal interpreter in mezzotint, forms the link between the seventeenth century and the Golden Age of the technique in England. Horace Walpole said of him that he was “the best mezzotinter that has appeared, who unites softness with strength, and finishing with freedom.”
Design and typography: Tina Beebe
Typographic composition: Eastern Typesetting Company
Printing: The Meriden Gravure Company
Production Supervision: Yale University Printing Service