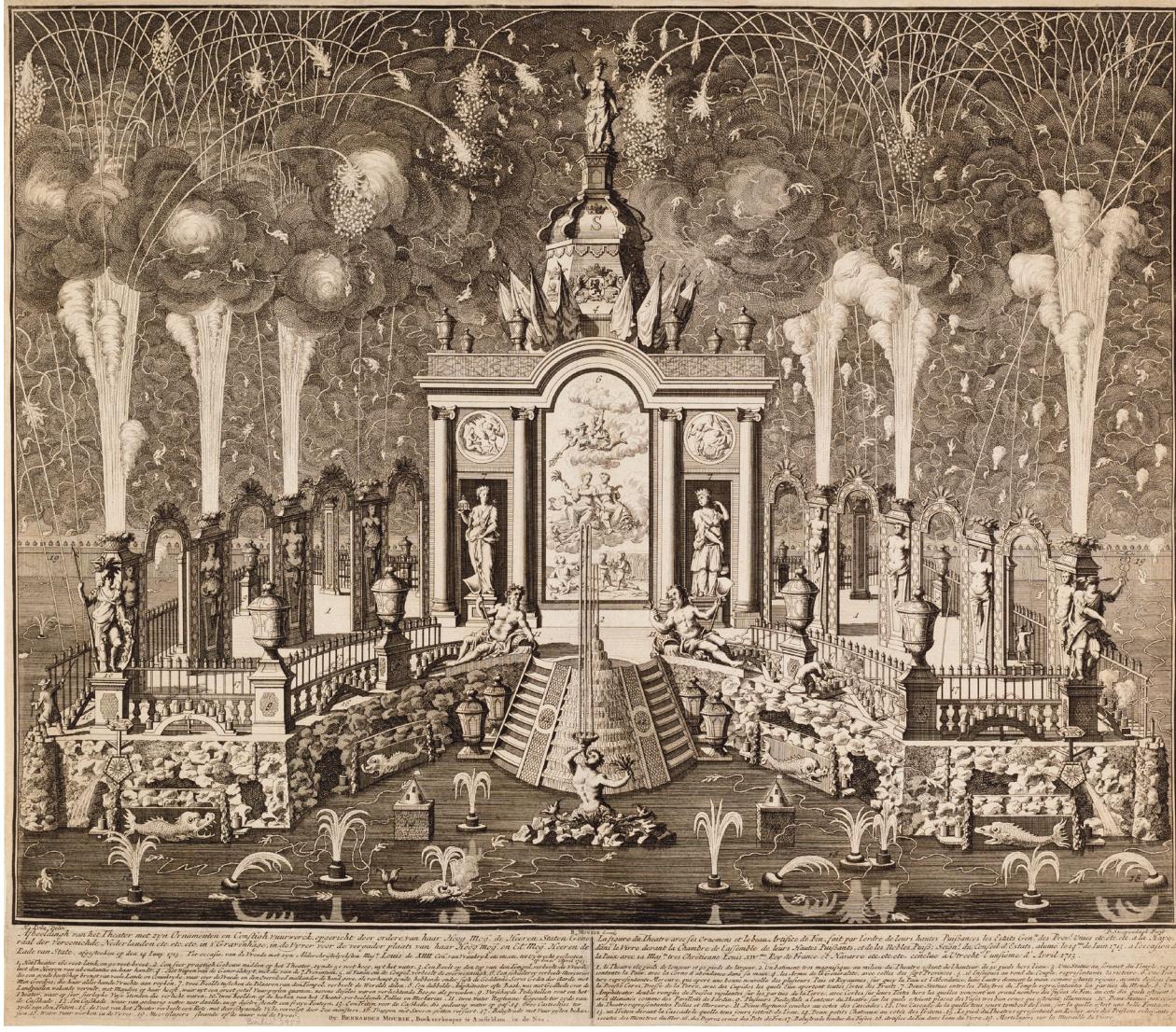


Identity and Belonging in Early Modern Europe



ORGANIZED BY ALEXANDRA LETVIN
ASSISTANT CURATOR OF EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN ART

ALLEN MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM, SPRING 2022

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Allen Memorial
Art Museum

What role do art and architecture play in shaping a shared civic, social, or religious identity? This question was of central importance to artists and their patrons in early modern Europe (ca. 1500–1800), a time of empire building and conflict abroad, as well as population growth and the expansion of cities at home.

The printed images in this exhibition reveal the ways in which identity and belonging were visually constructed in early modern Europe. They demonstrate how cities could be dynamic spaces transformed by ephemeral architecture as part of extravagant political and religious festivals, and how urban venues—from shopping arcades to theaters—could be sites for social engagement, sometimes across socioeconomic lines. By picturing people whose racial, religious, cultural, gender, or sexual identities transcended societal norms, prints could also reinforce understandings of difference by defining who did and did not belong to a community.

Alexandra Letvin, Assistant Curator of European and American Art



Michele Giovanni Marieschi
(Italian, 1710–1743)
The Gates of the Arsenale, from the series
Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus (Views of Venice), 1741
Etching
Charles F. Olney Fund, 1972.3

This view of Venice's Arsenale offers insight into how monuments could shape civic identity and how people, whether through their daily routines or through festivals and processions, could activate urban spaces.

The Arsenale was the largest industrial complex in early modern Europe. Workers at its shipyards assembled the vessels that facilitated Venice's

dominance as a maritime power and cemented its status as the gateway between the eastern Mediterranean and Europe. The lion above the entrance to the Arsenale is the symbol of Venice; here it functions as a perpetual reminder that the work performed within was in service of the Venetian Republic.

Throughout the public square are a range of individuals and groups engaging with urban space in a variety of ways: laborers carry heavy loads; a man kneels in prayer; two men wearing turbans converse, perhaps visitors from the Ottoman Empire; men solicit alms; and a confraternity (an association of laypeople) appear to ready themselves for a procession.



Matthäus Merian the Elder
(Swiss, 1593–1650)
View of London, 1638
Engraving
Gift of Frederick B. Artz (OC 1916), 1958.37

Views such as this one give a sense of the impressive scale of early modern European cities. A printed cityscape might serve as a substitute for travel to a faraway locale; it could also offer a city's



resident the opportunity to consider their place within the broader life and fabric of the urban environment.

Matthäus Merian produced hundreds of impressive and intricate maps and views of European cities, including this print of London looking over Southwark and across the Thames River. Merian never went to London, but he based his composition on prints from the early 1600s, when the city's population was around 200,000. A key along the bottom of the print identifies landmarks and points of interest, such as Old St. Paul's Cathedral, London Bridge, and the Globe Theater.

LEFT: Christoph Jakob Wilhelm Carl Joachim Freiherr von Hallerstein
(German, 1771–1839)
Cross-Section of a Panorama with a View of Berlin, 1801
Pen, ink, and watercolor on paper
Purchase Show Fund, 1960.100

This watercolor depicts a type of entertainment that became quite popular in the late 1700s: the panorama. Visitors paid admission to enter a space that offered a 360-degree panoramic view of a city or landscape.

The cross-section format of this image emphasizes the social aspect of this new attraction, inviting us to imagine the conversations among the various groups of people taking in the sights of the city.

Andrea Andreani (Italian, 1558/59–1629)
After Andrea Mantegna (Italian, 1431–1506)
A Figure on a Triumphal Chariot Surrounded by Figures on Horseback, from The Triumph of Julius Caesar, 1599
Chiaroscuro woodcut
Bequest of Parks and Christie Campbell, 2020.17.1

Beginning in the late 1300s, Italians increasingly portrayed themselves as heirs to the glories and achievements of the ancient Roman empire. Images played an important role in promoting and asserting this identity.

This print depicts a triumph: an ancient Roman procession that celebrated a general's military victory. It preserves the composition of one of nine large-scale paintings that the noble Gonzaga family of Mantua commissioned from the artist Andrea Mantegna depicting Julius Caesar's return from a successful military campaign along with soldiers, standard bearers, musicians, and the spoils of war. The Gonzagas were condottieri—professional soldiers for hire. By commissioning this series, they portrayed themselves as modern-day Caesars.

Louis-Joseph Le Lorrain (French, 1715–1759)
Solemnis Equitationis ad Vaticanum Incessus, mid-18th century
Etching

Gift of James A. Bergquist, Boston, in honor of Andria Derstine, Director, 2020.11.1



Stefano della Bella (Italian, 1610–1664)
The Church of San Lorenzo as Decorated for the Funeral of Francesco de' Medici, 1634
Etching
Prints and Drawings Acquisition Fund, 2014.35

The Church of San Lorenzo in Florence was the parish church for the Medici, one of the most powerful families in Italy. This print depicts the decorative alterations of the church for the funeral of Francesco de' Medici. Dynastic symbols such as the Medici family emblem (a shield with six balls) are combined with reminders of the impermanence of life in the form of the elaborate skeletons that line the church's nave.

Louis Lecoeur (French, active 1780–after 1800)
After Jacques François Joseph Swebach-Desfontaines (French, 1769–1823)
Bal de La Bastille (Ball of the Bastille), ca. 1790
Color aquatint and engraving
Gift of Paul F. Walter (OC 1957), 1976.27

Public monuments and their meanings could be transformed not only through decoration, but also through events and human actions.

A political prison, armory, and fortress, the Bastille was declared by French revolutionaries to be a monument to the monarchy's "despotism and tyranny." They stormed the structure on July 14, 1789, a day now celebrated as Bastille Day. Within a year, the building was demolished.

This print depicts a ball held on the ruins of the Bastille celebrating the first anniversary of its fall. The event, and its depiction, convert a monument to oppression into a joyous and optimistic symbol of the future.





Jacques Philippe LeBas
(French, 1707–1783)

Représentation de l'arrivée de la descente du roi Louis XV devant le principal portail de l'église cathédrale de Strasbourg: le 5 octobre, 1744 (Representation of the Arrival of King Louis XV before the Cathedral of Strasbourg: 5 October 1744), 1744

Engraving

Gift of the Oberlin College Library, 1955.63

This print depicts the transformation of Strasbourg's cathedral and surrounding square on the occasion of King Louis XV's visit to the city in 1744. The artist minutely renders the city's architectural features and its inhabitants, while also using repeating forms and figures to emphasize the grand scale of the event.



Frans Hogenberg
(Dutch, ca. 1540–ca. 1590)

Entrance of the Cardinal and Archduke Albert I into Brussels, 11 February 1596, late 16th century

Etching

Gift of Eleanore M. Jantz in Memory of Harold Jantz, 2014.31.3

Prints are often the sole surviving records of the elaborate ephemeral architecture created for festivals and civic celebrations. The time, expense, and expertise required to construct these fleeting monuments were enormous, but the decorations served as effective political propaganda and could also help in creating a sense of shared civic identity.

This print depicts the triumphal entry of the Archduke Albert of Austria into Brussels, the capital of the Spanish Netherlands. A son of the Holy Roman Emperor, Albert had traveled there to assume the governorship of the Spanish Netherlands.

When Albert arrived at Brussels's Louvain Gate, he was greeted by civic authorities who presented him with the keys to the city. He then embarked on a processional route documented by this print. This image reveals the range of monuments—from triumphal arches to a boat on wheels—that were created to celebrate this moment of transition in political leadership and portray Albert as divinely ordained to assume this position.



Daniel William Stoopendaal (Dutch, 1672–1726)
After Hendrik Pola (Dutch, 1676–1748)

Afbeelding van het Theater met zyn Ornamente en Constigh Vuurwerck, June 14, 1713 (Image of the Theater and its Ornaments. Fireworks for the Peace of Utrecht at the Hague), 1713

Etching and engraving on laid paper

Prints and Drawings Acquisition Fund, 2021.3

Extravagant and theatrical festivals celebrating military victories, marriages, births, and other events were common in cities and courts across early modern Europe and constituted a major form of public entertainment. Festivals might last several days, and they often culminated in multisensory fireworks displays that took place against massive stage sets with complex iconographic messages. Beginning in the 1500s, prints and festival books were commissioned to document these ephemeral events and broadcast them widely.

Theodor van Thulden (Flemish, 1606–1669)
After Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640)

The Arch of Hercules Prodigius, from Introitus Honori Serenissimi Principis Ferdinandi (Triumphal Entry of the Most Serene and Honorable Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand), 1641

Etching

Gift of James A. Bergquist, Boston, in appreciation of Lucille Stiger, 2021.7.27

Just as prints could record the scenography of a festival or the route of a procession, they also could record the intricate iconographic details of



the ephemeral art and architecture constructed for such events. This print, for example, documents a triumphal arch designed in 1634 by Peter Paul Rubens to celebrate the newly appointed governor of the Spanish Netherlands' visit to Antwerp.

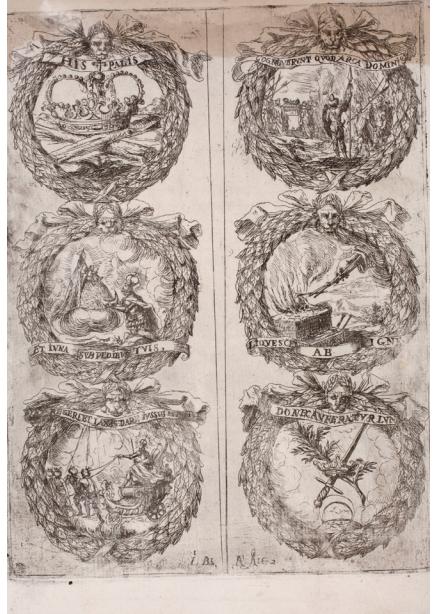
It was published seven years after the visit in a commemorative book recording the decorations made for the celebrations, which included arches and stages erected throughout the processional route.



Lucas de Valdés
(Spanish, 1661–1724)
Emblem Pages from the festival book Fiestas de la S. Iglesia Metropolitana y Patriarcal de Sevilla (Festivals of Seville Cathedral), 1671 or 1675
Etching
Gift of James A. Bergquist, Boston, in memory of Wolfgang Stechow, 2015.34.4 and 2015.34.5

These etchings record some of the decorations made for an extravagant religious festival held in Seville to celebrate the beatification of King Ferdinand III of Castile (1201–1252), long considered a hero for his recapture of important Andalusian territories that had been under Muslim control, including Seville.

For five days in May 1671, Seville's streets and cathedral were transformed with ephemeral architecture in a massive undertaking that brought together the major artists active in the city. The only record of the festival was a luxurious book, of which these pages were a part, which was distributed across Europe after the festival.

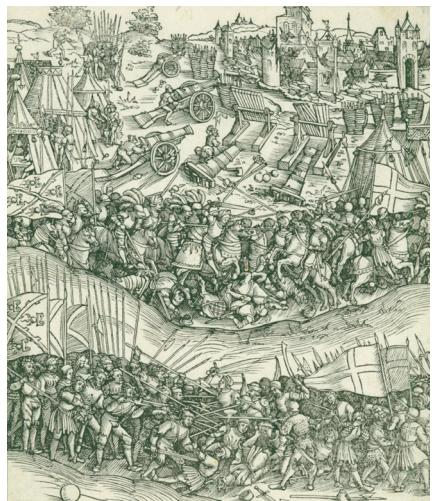


BELOW: Wolf Traut
(German, ca. 1486–1520)
The First War in Gelderland, from The Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I, ca. 1515
Woodcut
Friends of Art Fund, 1968.7

While this print might appear to be a stand-alone work, it is a small element of one of the most ambitious printing projects ever undertaken: a monumental paper arch celebrating the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I.

Produced by a team of printmakers, the Triumphal Arch was an impressive piece of propaganda that celebrated Maximilian's ancestry and accomplishments. One of the largest prints ever made, it comprises 195 woodcuts and measures almost 12 feet tall when assembled. Mounted on the walls of public spaces, such as city halls and governmental buildings, it projected a carefully tailored message about Maximilian's identity and importance to his subjects.

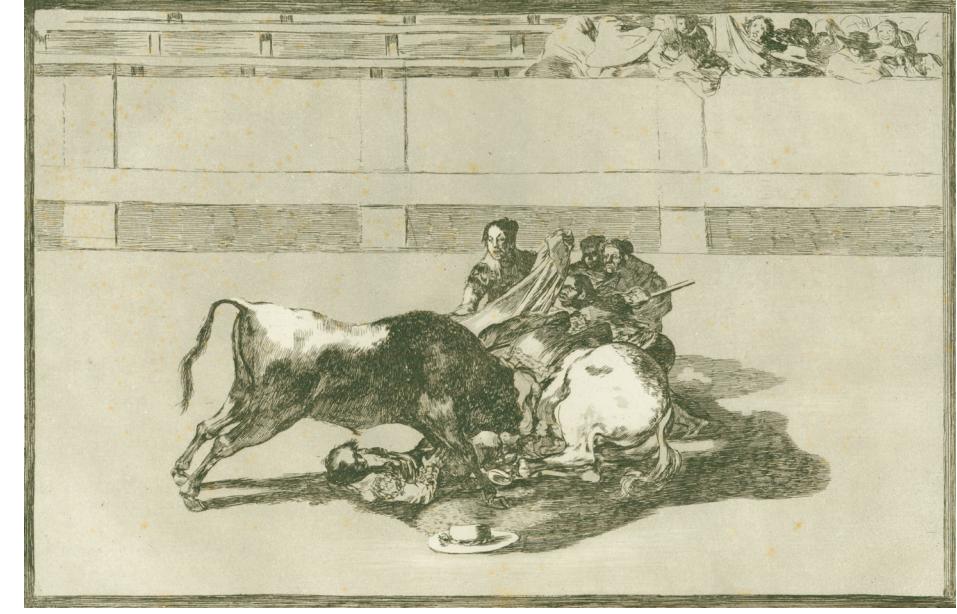
This print depicts the elaborate stage set for the fireworks celebrating the Peace of Utrecht (1713) put on by the States General in the Hague. In the center is a monumental triumphal arch (measuring 160 by 90 feet, and an astonishing 50 feet high), crowned by a statue of Peace. The printed explanation below tells us that the central painting depicts "Mercury bringing the joyful message of peace and abundance to the many countries and realms involved."



Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes
(Spanish, 1746–1828)
Caida de un picador de su caballo debajo del toro (A Picador Falls Underneath the Bull from his Horse), from the series *La Tauromaquia (Bullfighting)*, 1814–16
Etching, aquatint, and drypoint
R. T. Miller Jr. Fund, 1943.223

Francisco Goya's *La Tauromaquia* depicts the history and contemporary practice of bullfighting in Spain in a series of 33 prints. Bullfighting was a divisive topic in the late 1700s and early 1800s; many were concerned that this public spectacle promoted violent and disorderly behavior, while others celebrated it as a national pastime that could build a shared Spanish identity.

In this print, an angry bull stomps over a fallen picador, who attempted to slow the bull down by inserting a pica, or spear, into its neck muscles. The bull attacks a horse while several men try to distract the bull and save the picador. A group of spectators in the background display a range of emotions and reactions, from grimaces of horror to smiles of entertainment.



Abraham Bosse
(French, 1602–1676)
Actors at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, ca. 1633–34
Etching
Gift of Carl Read Gerber (OC 1958) in honor of Maxine Wenzler Houck (OC 1958), 2021.20

The late 1500s saw the construction of public theaters in cities including Paris and London. These venues made secular drama, an entertainment

previously available primarily to the elite, accessible to a broad range of audiences.

This print shows a troupe of comedians at the first public theater in France, built in 1548. The actors are performing a form of theater known as the commedia dell'arte, or Italian Comedy, which is characterized by improvised dialogue with a cast of recognizable stock characters and plots.

William Hogarth
(English, 1697–1764)
Southwark Fair, 1733–34
Etching and engraving
Annie A. Wager Bequest, 1975.202

Fairs could be venues for both trade and entertainment in early modern Europe. Held annually in London, Southwark Fair was a notorious gathering of revelers and popular amusements. As seen in this print, temporary stages offered a range of spectacles, from plays to puppet shows.



Philippe-Louis Debucourt
(French, 1755–1832)
Promenade de la Gallerie du Palais Royal (The Palais Royal-Gallery's Walk), 1787
Etching with engraving and color aquatint
Gift of Theodore B. Donson and Marvel M. Griep, 2013.65.1



Abraham Bosse
(French, 1602–1676)
La Galerie du Palais (Palace Gallery), ca. 1637
Etching
Gift of Heinrich Schwarz and the Helen Ward Memorial Collection, 1950.16

Abraham Bosse produced a number of etchings documenting the fashions and manners of contemporary Parisian society. This print is set in the Galerie du Palais, an arcade of more than 200 luxury shops that was a natural meeting place for well-heeled Parisians. The vendors here sell books, fans and gloves, and lace collars.



Melchior Lorck
(Danish, 1527–after 1583)
Sultan Süleyman and the Süleymaniye Mosque, Constantinople, 1574 (or earlier), altered in 1688 to represent Ibrahim I, 1559–1688
Engraving
Gift of Eleanore M. Jantz in memory of Harold Jantz, 1991.18.2

Prints played a major role in defining Europeans' understanding of faraway places and their inhabitants, and thus how Europeans conceived of themselves in relation to other peoples and cultures.

Between 1555 and 1559, Melchior Lorck traveled to Constantinople as one of three ambassadors sent by the Habsburg Emperor Charles V. During his time there, Lorck made several drawings documenting his observations of Ottoman people and buildings, which he would later turn into a series of prints that were popular across Europe.

While some may have interpreted Lorck's prints as authentic records of life in the Ottoman Empire, others saw them as generic templates for picturing the Ottoman "other." This is evident in this print's history. Lorck depicted the Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1494–1566) and identified him with an inscription. In 1688, however, an unknown artist removed Lorck's text and added "IBRAHIM I" next to the turbaned figure. With this simple act of erasure and reinscription, the print was transformed into a representation of Sultan Ibrahim I (1615–1648).





Aegidius Sadeler (Flemish, 1570–1629)
After Titian (Italian, ca. 1488–1576)
Laura Dianti with a Black Page, early 17th century
Engraving
Prints and Drawings Acquisition Fund and gift of Arnold Victor Coonin (OC 1986) in memory of his parents, Albert Coonin and Cecile Sobel Coonin, 2021.17

Both enslaved and free Africans came to Europe in growing numbers in the 1400s and 1500s, and they were increasingly represented by European artists. These images helped shape European perceptions and understandings of racial and cultural difference.

This print preserves the composition of a painting by Titian that catalyzed a new genre of European portraits that depict a white noble person accompanied by an adoring Black servant or slave. Titian deployed several visual strategies to distinguish the Black child in this portrait as “other.” The woman puts her hand on the child’s shoulder while the child looks up at her, creating a visual hierarchy in status. The child’s striped clothing and earrings were also common artistic shorthand to signify difference in European depictions of Africans.



Richard James Lane (British, 1800–1872)
After Mary Parker Leighton (British, 1810–1864)
The Rt. Hon. Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby ‘The Ladies of Llangollen’ (detail), ca. 1840
Lithograph

Gift of Dominique H. Vasseur (OC 1973) in honor of Ronald F. Patnik and Lawrence W. Rassin, 2021.25

Lady Eleanor Butler (1739–1829) and Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831) abandoned their lives in Irish society to pursue what was then considered an unconventional life together in Llangollen, North Wales.

This print depicting the “Ladies of Llangollen” in their library is based on a watercolor sketch made by Mary Parker Leighton, who visited them in 1828. As evidenced in this image, the “Ladies” often dressed in men’s clothing.

The story of the “Ladies of Llangollen” invites us to consider who was included and excluded from European societies. The “Ladies” referred to their life in North Wales as an “exquisite retirement” from the pressures to conform to societal expectations. Paradoxically, their outsider status made them veritable celebrities. They received many visitors at their remote home, including the Romantic poet William Wordsworth, who wrote a sonnet about them. Their popularity also led to a great demand for printed images of them, such as this one.