

## Sold highlights, a few items of the past 3 years. - (Things you could have bought from us).

**Note:** Not all our books, prints or objects are on this site, nor will they be in the future.

We have a normal open shop in which things are bought and we participate at fairs, on which we always like to present new items.

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### complete set of the famous works on European & Surinam flowers and insects



**Merian, Maria Sibylla. De Europische Insecten,** Naauwkeurig onderzocht, na 't leven geschildert, en in print gebragt...Hier is nog bygevoegt... Beschryving van de Planten, in dit Werk voorkomende: en de Uitlegging van agtien nieuwe Plaatte, door dezelve Maria Sibilla Merian geteekent, en die men na haar dood gevonden heeft... (and:) **Over de Voortteeling** en wonderbaerlyke Veranderingen der Surinaamsche Insecten... naar het leeven afgebeeld, en beschreeven...; zynde elke geplaatst op dezelfde Gewassen, Bloemen, en Vruchten, daar ze op gevonden zyn: Beneffens de Beschryving dier Gewassen. Waar in ook de wonderbare Padden, Hagedissen, Slangen, Spinnen, en andere zeltzaame gediertens... Alles in Amerika...naar het leeven en levensgrootte geschildert, en nu in 't Koper overgebragt... Amsterdam, J. Fr. Bernard, 1730. 2 Vols. Large folio. Uniform contemporary h.calf, backs gilt in compartments with fleurons, later marbled sides, and renewed endpapers. In the first Vol: (2 blank), (4), 84 pp, (2 blank) pp. text. Title with handcoloured engraved vignette, 184 engraved plates on 47 leaves, richly coloured by hand, and a large engraved tail-piece coloured

by hand; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vol: (2 blank), (4), 72, (2 blank) pp. text. Fine handcoloured frontispiece, engraved by F. Ottens, extra heightened with gold, handcoloured engraved title vignette, and 72 full-page engraved plates, very beautifully coloured by hand.

Maria S. Merian was the daughter of the successful German engraver-publisher Matthäus Merian and pupil of the artist Jacob Marrel. From early age she developed an interest in the metamorphosis of insects. After a separation from her husband, she and her two daughters moved in 1686 to the Netherlands. There she made the personal acquaintance of serious collectors, owners of natural historical cabinets ('Kunst- und Wunderkammer'). After having seen specimens of insects from Dutch Guyana, she wanted to study these insects in their natural environment. With the financial support from directors of the Dutch West Indian Company, she and her daughters sailed off to Surinam, where they stayed from 1699 until 1701. All of Merian 's works were published and sold by herself, issued part by part, in small editions, each with a different title, in coloured and uncoloured versions, over an extended period of time. On the basis of some 60 water-colours Maria prepared her last and most important book, the '*Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium, ofte Verandering der Surinaamsche Insecten.*' The third and last part on these Surinam insects, was published posthumously by one of her daughters, and completely issued as: '*Over de voortteeling...*'.

Belgian artist Berthe Hoola van Nooten (1840-1885).

Shortly after having followed her husband to Java, Indonesia, she became a widow at twenty-two, indebted and with a family to support. To make a living, she took to the painting of the flora of the island.



Her very skilled sketches show the exuberant colour display of tropical fruits and flowers, ideally suited to the new technique of chromolithography, printed by P. de Pannemaeker in Belgium. "The excellent reproduction of the artist's drawings in the form of chromolithographs lends an added tactility to these striking images" (An Oak Spring Flora). Among the depicted plants are: the Mango, Pomelo, Rambutan, Durian, Cacao, Custard-Apple, Banana, Bread-Fruit, and Star-Fruit. The work was published in parts in 1863-1864, and republished twice, using the same plates. Good copy.

Great Flower Books, p. 60; Stafleu & Cowan 3025; Nissen, BBI, 931; Landwehr Col. Plates 79; An Oak Spring Flora 87

### Clara, the travelling 'Dutch' rhinoceros



**Vera Effigies Rhinacerotis - Le véritable Portrait d'un Rhinocerot vivant - Waare afbeelding van een leevendige renoceros of naashooren - A true delineation or Pourtraiture of a living Rhinoceros.** (Germany, ca. 1747). Copper-engraving, 445 x 550 mm., second state of 5, of which only 7 other copies are known, none in a Dutch library. Fine copy of this extremely rare print.

On the 22nd of July 1741 the VOC vessel 'De Knappenhof' under captain Douwe Mout van der Meer returned from East India in the port of Rotterdam with a curious cargo: a live rhinoceros. It was captured as a young animal in the Kingdom of Assam, Bengal, and presented as a gift to Jan Albert Sichterman, the local director of the Dutch East India Company. Sichterman kept the young rhinoceros in his house, where for two years it 'has run round the tables of Gentlemen and Ladies like a lap-dog' as an English poster of around 1750 relates. When the rhinoceros grew too big to be kept as a domestic animal, Sichterman donated it to Douwe Mout van der Meer, a captain of the VOC who happened to be in Bengal at the time.

Little is known about captain Mout. He was born in 1705 and worked for the VOC until he met with

the rhinoceros and saw his fortune made. Back in the Netherlands he immediately started to exhibit his heavy-weight heroine, soon affectionately named 'Clara', in his hometown Leyden and other Dutch cities. He gradually expanded his travels and refined the organisation of what developed into a real Grand Tour through Europe. A specially constructed waggon was built to transport Clara, and Douwe Mout formed an entire menagerie, including a driver, a keeper for Clara, a cleric to arrange bookings, and a man to take the entrance money.

In order to gain as much publicity as possible for his rhino circus, he had prints and broad-sheets made to serve as posters and souvenirs. Clearly the former VOC servant had a commercial talent. This publicity brought thousands of paying viewers to his exotic spectacle. A true rhinoceros craze went through Europe for some sixteen years, not only attracting many ordinary spectators, but also artists, writers, scientists and a lot of European Princes.

Clara was only the fifth rhinoceros to arrive in Europe alive, but her great significance, commercially, iconographically as well as artistically soon made her predecessors fall into oblivion. Drawings, paintings and prints were made by artists like Jan Wandelaar at Leyden, Johann Elias Ridinger at Augsburg, Jean-Baptiste Oudry at Paris, and the Italian Pietro Longhi. Eventually the features of the 'Dutch' rhinoceros even superseded the famous Dürer woodcut of 1515 in the European imagination. Natural historians, including the great Buffon, came to study the rare animal. Buffon himself drew Clara several times, and it was the Dutch rhino who featured in his *Histoire Naturelle*. The Dutch naturalist Johannes le Franq van Berkhey, professor at the University of Leiden, made a drawing 'after live' of Clara in 1758, the year she died. Many other writers were infected with rhinomania, like Abbé Ladvocat who writes in his *Lettre sur le Rhinocéros* (Paris 1749) that the animal 'likes beer and wine and the smoke of tobacco.' A German critic mentioned in a letter to Diderot that 'all Paris, so easily inebriated by small objects is now busy with a kind of animal called rhinoceros'. Even Casanova refers to an experience with the brutish animal when his current mistress - seeing Casanova with his dark skin and masculine features - mistakes him for the rhinoceros itself.

Douwe Mout van der Meer had special prints made in a variety of types, sizes and price ranges that were sold as souvenir prints after the viewing of the rhinoceros. The present large engraving belonged to the most expensive category. It was originally engraved between May and September 1747 by or after the British (?) artist H. Oster, and printed in Frankfurt for the occasion of Clara's visit between the 5th and 12th of September. The image of the rhinoceros leads back to the first of the large-paper souvenir prints, made in 1746 in Braunschweig by Johann Schmidt after a drawing by A.A. Beck. The accompanying captions were cut in four languages, Latin, French, Dutch and English, so the plate could be used in different countries. In the centre below the image of Clara, Douwe Mout had his own portrait engraved within a cartouche stating his year of birth.

The travelling rhino circus came to an end on April 14, 1758, when Clara died in London at the age of 21.

This print was jointly offered by Antiquariaat Acanthus in Utrecht and Antiquariaat A.G. van der Steur in Haarlem.

Cf. Muller 3786 (later adapted variant of this 2nd state, with the verse above the rhinoceros); Atlas Van Stolk 3674 (4th state); Clarke, *The Rhinoceros from Dürer to Stubbs. 1515-1799* (1986), pp. 47-68; Verheij, *Op reis met Clara, De geschiedenis van een bezienswaardige neushoorn* (1992), p. 22; Ingrid Faust & Klaus Stopp, *Zoologische Einblattdrucke und Flugschriften vor 1800*, vol. V, no. 723.2 (to be published, Stuttgart, Anton Hiersemann). We thank the authors for their permission to read the proof-copy.