

- [news](#)

- [renovatie museum](#)
- [boijmans projecten](#)
- [depot](#)
- [corporate](#)
- [news archive](#)

[browse through all our news.](#)

- [in the news](#)

[view notable news mentions.](#)

- [press contact](#)

[find contact details.](#)

- [news topics](#)

- [Renovatie museum](#)
- [Boijmans projecten](#)
- [Depot](#)
- [Corporate](#)

- [about](#)

- [media kits](#)

- [in the news](#)

- [press contact](#)



[netherlands](#)



- [Netherlands \(NL\)](#)



- [Netherlands \(EN\)](#)



- [Worldwide](#)

[Search in newsroom](#)

[boijmans.nl](#)

12 May 2021, 11:19 (CEST)

# Boijmans acquires 16th-century book of prints filled with fantastical beings

**A 16th-century book with 120 woodcut prints, *Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel*, has been added to the Boijmans collection. This fantastical work presents a catwalk of freaks: strange, hybrid beings that seem to have walked straight out of the grotesque works by Bosch or Bruegel.**

With the support of Vereniging Rembrandt (in part from its Thematic Fund for the Middle Ages and Renaissance) and Stichting Lucas van Leyden, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam has made a new acquisition in the form of a book of prints from 1565: *Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel* (The drolatic dreams of Pantagruel). Boijmans is the only museum in the Netherlands to possess a sizeable collection of works by Bosch and Bruegel, as well as an international collection of Surrealism, so the book represents an intriguing link in that continuum. The *Songes drolatiques* can already be admired in [the museum's online collection](#); from this autumn it will be on show in the newly opened Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen as well.

**Fusien Bijl de Vroe, Director of Vereniging Rembrandt:** *"This parade of fantastical creatures shows what happened when artists of the 16th century allowed their imaginations free rein. It is an acquisition that dovetails with the 'fantastic' tradition from Bosch and Bruegel through to Surrealism."*

**Sjarel Ex, Director of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen:** *"The Songes drolatiques is an exceptional acquisition for the Prints and Drawings collection, while also being an expansion of the vivacious art-historical context provided by our unique collection of surreal and fantastic art, from the late Middle Ages through to Dalí. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is deeply grateful to Vereniging Rembrandt and Stichting Lucas van Leyden for the financial support with the purchase of the Songes drolatiques."*

**Potbellied or hunchbacked**

Rabelais, Bosch, Bruegel, Dalí – these are the major figures with which *Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel* is associated. The publisher of this small book of prints, Richard Breton, already propagated this mythical status when he published the volume in Paris in 1565 as the 'last work' of the author François Rabelais, naming it after his bestseller about the giant Pantagruel. The *Songes drolatiques* contains 120 woodcuts, each page presenting a wildly different character: peculiar, hybrid beings, a combination of human and animal, insect, plant and object; potbellied or hunchbacked, with extraordinary noses, snouts, trunks or beaks.

These creatures immediately call to mind the hybrid freaks of nature of Jheronimus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel. Some of the themes are in fact directly borrowed from prints by Bruegel. The woodcuts are now attributed to the 16th-century Parisian designer and print publisher François Desprez.

***Songes drolatiques* and the Boijmans collection of Surrealism**

Since the 1960s Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has been building on the only international collection of Surrealism in the Netherlands, with masterpieces by Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Yves Tanguy and others. However, the museum regards the surreal to be much more than a neatly defined artistic movement; there are also works of art with surreal motifs from the past, such as the *Songes drolatiques*.

Facsimiles of the original *Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel* were published after its rediscovery in the nineteenth century. This is how the work came to the attention of the Surrealists, who discerned its like-minded congeniality. In 1973 Salvador Dalí created re-workings of these prints, already four centuries old, in the guise of a series of 23 lithographs. The *Songes drolatiques* are thus a link in the continuum of fantastical art that extends from the late Middle Ages through to Surrealism and onward to its vital continuation today.

**Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen**

While the museum’s all-embracing renovation and refurbishment is underway, the collection remains visible in classrooms and at museums around the world. In the autumn of 2021 the collection will be reassembled in Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, the world’s first publicly accessible art storage facility. Here the visitor can become acquainted with the stewardship, study and restoration of the impressive art collection with masterpieces that span across the history of Western art, applied arts and design, from the Middle Ages to the present. Opening up public access to the 151,000 or so artefacts in the Depot, an architectural icon designed by MVRDV, is bound to boost the allure of the Museumpark in Rotterdam as an international art platform.

- [Copy link](#)
- [Copy text](#)
- [Download](#)

About Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

Boijmans Van Beuningen – een huis voor verbeelding, inspiratie en creativiteit

Press contact details

- - **Jeroen van der Hulst**
  - Medewerker pers Boijmans Van Beuningen
  - [pressoffice@boijmans.nl](mailto:pressoffice@boijmans.nl)
  - [+31612666949](tel:+31612666949)
  - [Download vCard](#)

Share This News Release

- 
- 
- 
- 

Related Topics

- [Corporate](#)

Download & Copy

- [copy text](#)
- [copy link](#)

Press contact details

- **Jeroen van der Hulst**
- Medewerker pers Boijmans Van Beuningen
- [pressoffice@boijmans.nl](mailto:pressoffice@boijmans.nl)
- [+31612666949](tel:+31612666949)

Share

- 
- 
- 
- 

## Related News Releases

- 4 May 2021
- [Corporate](#)

### Sue-an van der Zijpp appointed as new Curator of Decorative Arts and Design at Boijmans

The collection of decorative arts and design at the Boijmans is to have a new custodian and exhibition creator. The former Groninger Museum curator Sue-an van der Zijpp is making the swit...

- 22 April 2021
- [Corporate](#)

### Boijmans loans 15 Chabots to the Chabot Museum

Next month will see Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam transferring 15 paintings by Henk Chabot to the adjacent Chabot Museum on a long-term loan. “Together we are making the Muse...

[Subscribe to updates](#)  
[Add to RSS feed](#)

---

 [Newsroom by pr.co](#)

**Get the latest from Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen**

You'll receive emails from the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Newsroom and acknowledge that your personal data will be processed in accordance with the privacy policy. You can opt out of these emails at any time via the unsubscribe link in each email.

**Frequency**

- ☒ Immediate Updates
- ☐ Daily Digest
- ☐ Weekly Digest
- ☐ Monthly Digest

Your Email Address

Subscribe

**Search the entire Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Newsroom**

Find news releases, media kits and clippings

Search

**Navigate to a press section**

- **[media kits](#)** [Find media files](#)
- **[news archive](#)** [Find news](#)
- **[press contact](#)** [Find contact details](#)
- **[about](#)** [Get to know us](#)