



Title: *Les Mourants sous le Bord des Routes (People Dying by the Roadside)*, from *Les Grandes Miseres de la Guerre*
Artist: Jacques Callot
Date: 1633
Size matted: 11 1/8" x 14 1/8";
image: 7 3/4" x 11 5/8"
Medium: Etching
Acquisition #: 2002.6.64
Additional works in the collection by the artist?

Yes: X No:

Artist's Biography

Jacques Callot (1592-1635) was a French etcher, engraver and draughtsman. He was one of the most accomplished printmakers in the Western tradition and one of the major exponents of the Mannerist style in the early 17th century. He was both technically and aesthetically advanced in printmaking, as is evident in his print. He took many steps forward in the actual printmaking process, which allowed for further details to be included. For example, Callot developed the *échope*, an etching tool which contains a slanted oval at the tip that allowed for greater detail and a swelling line.

Contextual Information

This print falls within a larger series of prints by Callot titled, *Les Grandes Misères et les malheurs de la guerre (The Large Miseries and Misfortunes of War)*. The series was so-called because Callot created another series of prints with the same subject matter, only smaller. This plate is 16 out of 18 in the series. Images in the series portray the tortures of war and the lives of soldiers. Specifically, the prints reference the destructive Thirty Years War in Europe. These images have been called one of the first anti-war statements as they focus on the negative aspects of armed conflict. This specific print shows unemployed soldiers dying in the streets.

Media Description

Jacques Callot was a superior printmaker and succeeded in producing elaborate prints. Callot was a master of showing multiple figures within the depth of space. As seen in this print, Callot etched precise details in a very small area to create a striking composition, a result of the advances Callot made in the etching process. Callot was responsible for developing multiple "stopping-outs," whereby he would allow the acid to bite at the plate while protecting parts he wanted to remain lighter (with a recipe for etching ground that he improved upon as well) so that a second acid biting could take place. His control over this process allowed him to create greater contrast, like that which engravers were able to achieve.

Related Terminology

Etching – the process of using strong acid to cut (also called "biting") into the unprotected parts of a metal surface to create a design in the metal

Engraving – the practice of creating a design on a hard, usually flat surface, by cutting grooves into it

Etching ground- used to protect the surface of the plate from the acid biting

References

<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T013207>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Grandes_Mis%C3%A8res_de_la_guerre

WHAT'S YOUR HISTORY?

Art Lesson Plan: K-5

Session Activity: Callot's prints are a visual history. His series shows and comments on the war by which he was surrounded. The idea of representing history by visual means is common, even now. The early 20th century artist Thomas Hart Benton painted many American everyday life scenes. One example of his use of visual history is his *Indiana Murals* in which he depicted the history of Indiana, both cultural and industrial. This activity will be an opportunity for students to show what they feel should be remembered from their time; they will create their own visual history works.

Objectives:

The students will discuss Callot's and Benton's works as visual histories. The students will create works which depict something from their personal experiences or observations.

Materials: washable tempera paint, paper, water bins, paint brushes, newspaper, pencils

Activity Procedure:

1. Have the students talk about life "then" (Callot's time) and "now" (Benton's time) as seen in the work.
2. Ask students to think about their personal experiences, and what they would like to say about their lives thus far. Or have them talk about things in their communities they feel should be remembered.
3. From the discussion, students will derive their own works of visual history.
4. Have students draw their ideas on paper to then be painted.
5. Allow students to present their paintings to the class. Have them explain the importance of their images and the reasons their works are "visual history."



Thomas Hart Benton, *Pioneers*, part of *The Indiana Murals*, 1933, mural.

Sunshine State Standards: K-5

Visual Arts: Creation and Communication

Standard 1: The student creates and communicates a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas using knowledge of structures and functions of visual arts.

Sunshine State Standards: 9-12

Visual Arts: Aesthetic and Critical Analysis

Standard 1: The student assesses, evaluates, and responds to the characteristics of works of art.

Visual Arts: Cultural and Historical Connections

Standard 1: The student understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

WHAT ABOUT PRINTS? Lesson Plan 9-12

Introduction: In the past, prints were often used as a means of reproducing large-scale paintings so that others—those who could not travel to see the physical work—could see reproductions. Artists would use prints to study other artists and their styles, but eventually printmaking itself became a popular medium for art. Printmakers developed higher quality prints due to new printmaking techniques, and like Callot, many artists became more interested in creating original prints. Jacques Callot's print series reflects on the miseries of war with which he was familiar during the Thirty Years War. After studying etching and favoring it over painting, Callot expressed his own opinions on the war and created a series of original prints.

Objectives

- A. Students will research and discuss the formal aesthetic qualities of Callot's prints.
- B. Students will research and discuss the intentions of printmakers, such as Callot.
- C. Students will research and discuss the ways in which print reproduction ability during Callot's time affected the popularity and influence of prints.

Example Discussion Prompts

OBJECTIVE A:

1. How comparable is a print to a painting?
How are prints and paintings similar and different?
2. Discuss the ways in which printmakers utilize contrast.
3. Since printmakers of etching primarily use line, critique Callot's use of line.

OBJECTIVE C:

1. Do you think the fact that there were multiple copies of prints lessened the wonder that viewers felt when viewing the images?
2. Why would artists want their works to be reproduced as prints?
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the reproductive ability of prints.

Activity

Students will write essays on one of the objectives. They may use a "compare and contrast" format for Objective A, comparing and contrasting two of Callot's prints. For Objective B, students should write a research essay which includes the historical context of the print and important events of Callot's life which may have influenced his prints. For Objective C, students will write on the positives and negatives of reproductive prints and original prints. What are the advantages and disadvantages of collecting prints?

OBJECTIVE B:

1. What events of the late sixteenth, early seventeenth centuries would have influenced Callot's life?
2. Why did Callot create these prints? What is the theme?
3. Who was Callot's audience?