

press release

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the museum of friesland acquires m.c. escher's 'day and night'

Thanks to support from the Woudsend Anno 1816 Foundation the Museum of Friesland has acquired the famous woodcut *Day and Night* (1938) by the graphic artist M.C. Escher. This work is one of the highlights in the exhibition *Escher's Journey*, which opens on 28 April in the Museum of Friesland. The print shows a Dutch landscape of fields, villages and water. At the top of the print, the fields transform into black and white birds that fly over the landscape in opposite directions. As one of his first landscape prints inspired by regular divisions of the plane, this print has an important place in Escher's oeuvre.

With *Day and Night*, Escher shares his unique artistic vision of the Dutch polder landscape. It is one of his first woodcuts based on plane filling, a compositional technique in which figures repeat themselves and transform into new shapes. Ploughed fields become birds; day becomes night. With the growing attention for the work of this Leeuwarden-born artist, the museum considers acquiring a key work such as this of vital importance. Moreover, landscape and identity are major cornerstones in the museum's acquisition policy.

day and night

In *Day and Night* we see a landscape that slowly takes on the appearance of black and white birds. On the left the representation is depicted in daylight, on the right the same scene is seen in the dark. Escher said of this: 'It was born logically from the associations light = day and dark = night.' The suggestion of a transition between day and night is reinforced by subtle gradations in grey tones, an effect that Escher created by using two blocks during printing.

Escher was fascinated by divisions of the plane because it is impossible to see it as a whole. His circle of acquaintances initially only thought the print was 'peculiar'. Yet it became one of Escher's best-selling works: in total he printed more than 650 of them.

technique

Escher used carbon paper to transfer his representations to stone or wood. A practical man, he sometimes used the same paper several times for different prints. The exhibition also features a carbon paper that still bears recognisable details of *Day and Night*. He printed the woodcut himself by pressing the Japanese paper onto the inked wooden block onto with a bone spoon. Because he rubbed with the convex side of the spoon, the various prints he made of the representation are never completely identical.

escher's journey

Escher's Journey makes M.C. Escher's development as a visual artist tangible. The influence of the places he lived is central to the exhibition. More than eighty original works, approximately twenty drawings, letters, photo material and personal objects lead visitors along M.C. Escher's path. XPEX Amsterdam's innovative exhibition design enhances the experience of Escher's life and work.

The exhibition 'Escher's Journey' is made possible by the main sponsor ING, the Blockbuster Fund, the Mondriaan Fund, Leeuwarden Municipality, St. Anthony Gasthuis, De Haan Advocaten & Notarissen, Leeuwarden-Fryslân European Capital of Culture 2018, Aegon, the Province of Friesland, and the BankGiro Lottery.

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Image material can be requested from the Museum of Friesland's marketing and communication department: communicatie@friesmuseum.nl / 058 – 255 55 00.



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