


Engraved print, signed “Hh”, no visible watermark

## AFTER DEATH, LIFE!

**Post Funera, Vita**

**Author**
HONDIUS, Hendrick

**Publication date**
1610

**Publisher**
Ex Officina Henrici Hondii. Cum Privilegio,

**Publication place**
[Hagae-Comitis,

**Physical description**
Engraved print, signed “Hh”, no visible watermark

**Dimensions**
310 by 210mm. (12.25 by 8.25 inches).

**Notes**
Hondius’s dramatic and allegorical memento mori which immortalizes his fellow artists, whose monograms appear engraved on pyramid shaped urns within a vaulted mausoleum: “AD” – Albrecht Dürer; “L” – Lucas van Leyden; “MVH” – Maarten van Heemskerk; “AG” – Heinrich Aldegrever; and “HS” – Hans Schäufelein.

Traditionally published as the last image in Hondius's series of seventy-two portraits of Flemish artists, past and present, 'Pictorum aliquot celebrium praecipué Germaniae Inferioris, Effigies' (1610). The series is based on, and updates Hieronymus Cock's series of twenty-three portraits, with the same title, published in Antwerp in 1572.

The image is resplendent with visual metaphors of death, and the all too brief passage of time: an articulated skeleton pierces the space between a winged clock-face and an hour-glass with an arrow. However, the image offers the hope of immortality for some. Three engraved sheets of paper, pasted at the foot of the entrance to a vault, torn and pealing at the edges, are inscribed with a verse in Latin, that translates to: "Pale Death seeks all things, and all must submit to him. No man's excuse, no man's honors, will satisfy him. But for they who have lived well there can be life after death: Consider those who painted well, that they live on even in Death. Through their paintings, a new life is gained from the living. Thus, may each man aim to live after death" – Pallida Mors omnes petit, huic parere necesse est. Non Color hic ullus, non juvat ullus Honos. Qui bene vixerunt, horum est Post Funera Vita: Qui bene pinxerunt vivere Morte puta. Ad vivum pictis tabulis nova vita paratur. Post mortem ut possit vivere quisque paret.

The portraits, which are loosely organised into three sections, also loosely reflect the diaspora of the artists associated with "Germaniae Inferioris", or the Hapsburg Netherlands of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The first part begins with the Hubert van Eyck (c1385/90-1426); the second with Albrecht Dürer (1475-1521), a native of Nuremberg; and the third by Jan van der Straet (alias Giovanni Stradano, 1523-1605), who spent most of his career in Florence in the service of the Medici Dukes and working closely with Giorgio Vasari. The final portrait in the series was usually of Isaac Oliver (1565-1617), a limner of French Huguenot descent who had migrated to London. "The structure of the volume thus articulated not only the continuation of 'Lower German' art(ists) in time, down the generations, but also its expansion in space, both through migration (Van der Straet) and through a kind of 'cultural imperialism' whereby figures of foreign birth, such as Dürer and Oliver, were incorporated as honorary members of the group" (Scholten and Woodall, page 9). This idea is something that Hondius emphasizes in his dedicatory poem: "Here are various painters: not all have the same task, because what is new and varied pleases. All do not have the same genius. One gives pleasure with colour [and] shades; another with pleasant flowers [and] trees. [Yet] another skilfully paints fields, the swelling sea [and] rocks, [while] another is famous for cities [and] images. Almost all these are those that Belgica, mother of artists, brought forth: she thought it disgraceful to yield [to other nations] in genius".

**Bibliography**

New Hollstein 115; Scholten and Woodall, 'Netherlandish artists on the move', 2013

**Provenance**

**Price:** £2000

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