



LEEWARDEN

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITY VIEWS FROM 1600 TO NOW

W BOOKS



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Compiled and introduced by Gert Elzinga

WBOOKS

FOREWORD

The municipality of Leeuwarden has an interesting, rich and multifaceted art collection. This is in large part thanks to the Netherlands' first salaried city archivist, Wopke Eekhoff. When Eekhoff was appointed in 1838 he immediately set to work on a municipal art collection. His main objective was: 'to bring together everything that art has produced in order to illuminate the written and printed sources of the city's history'. During the almost forty years he worked for the municipality he assembled a large, systematically organised collection of paintings, prints, drawings and maps. In fact, he was the first professional art collector of Friesland in public service. He was also directly involved in the creation of the Print Room of the Fries Museum. His successors at the Municipal Archives (and later at the Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden) were able to build on his pioneering work.

During visits to other Cultural Capitals in recent years it became apparent that these cities rarely gave the visitor much information on the (rich) history of the places

themselves: not in the public spaces, the exhibitions or in the publications. On the occasion of Leeuwarden Cultural Capital of Europe 2018, the Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden (HCL) - the manager of the municipal art collection - has taken the initiative to present to the public a choice of the finest paintings, prints and drawings of the Frisian capital made from the seventeenth century to the present. HCL thought it would be a good idea to show a selection of works from its Topographical Historical Atlas not only by means of an exhibition (in the HCL building) and a book, but also by displaying images (copies) in the streets. In unexpected places - shop windows, parking garages, public billboards - visitors and residents can experience what the city used to look like and how Leeuwarden has changed over the many years.

Never before have so many views of the city of Leeuwarden been brought together at the same time in an exhibition and in a book. Painters and draftsmen of the time together with more recent artists show

the wealth and poverty of the historic city centre and its immediate surroundings. Often accurately, but sometimes with a little imagination as well. The little gems, but also the rotten bits. Sometimes we are shown buildings, squares, streets and dead-end alleys that are long gone, and other times views still visible today. The selection for the exhibition and this book was made by the art historian Gert Elzinga. For years he was the curator of the Print Room of the Fries Museum, and he has been a volunteer at the HCL since 2011. Colleagues in the Fries Museum have cooperated generously in making the works in their collections available.

Hopefully these *most beautiful city views* have succeeded, in this special year, in revealing Leeuwarden as one of the Netherlands' most surprising provincial capitals.

Geart de Vries
Director of the Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden (HCL)





VIEW FROM THE SOUTH OF THE CITY OF LEEUWARDEN

Jacob van der Croos, circa 1675, oil on canvas

Jacob Pietersz van der Croos was born in The Hague around 1642 as the son of a marine painter. Like various other painters from Holland, he ended up in Leeuwarden for matrimonial reasons. In 1667 he married the Catholic Teuntje Baij. He died after 1683, probably in this city. His view from the south shows the city's silhouette. On the ramparts there are still post mills, the oldest type of Dutch windmill, in which the body and its wings rest on a trestle. The Oldehove tower is

visible on the left and on the right is the Nieuwe Tower, which was torn down in 1884. The mill all the way on the right stood outside the ramparts, on the Schrans (road). This was the Wijnhornster mill, by a small lock of the same name between Wijnhornsterzijlsloot (ditch) and the somewhat more easterly Potmarge river. A horseman rides on a bridge over this ditch towards the outer Wirdumerpoort (gate), a glimpse of which can be seen. Oddly, the historical outer gate itself is

not visible. The trees in the foreground on the left are painted so as to create depth. Between the trees one can see the roof of the Verlaats Inn, which lay next to the Verlaat, the lock between the Harlingervaart waterway and the city canal. Although many etchings have been made of the cityscape, this is the only painted view of Leeuwarden from the 17th century.



THE ROPEWALK ON THE OLDEHOOFSTER CHURCHYARD

Anonymous, circa 1900, gouache



As the name suggests, there was a churchyard here for centuries.

This churchyard was once part of the Oldehoofdstertep, or man-made mound, on which people were living already in Roman times. In the 12th century a tuff, Romanesque church stood here, in and around which people were buried. The churchyard was still used, both inside and outside the walls of the old building, even after the successor to the church was largely demolished in the 17th century. The remains of the church were not cleared until much later, in order to level the area. The Oldehoofster Churchyard remained

the most prominent in the city until 1833, when a new graveyard on Spanjaardslaan (avenue) was completed. The tombstones and the pavements of *geeltjes* (small yellow bricks particular to Friesland) of the old churchyard were removed in order to provide the area with walking paths and green space and to sow grass. This was probably when the ropewalk was also constructed, immortalized here by an unknown artist. A ropewalk requires a small stretch of land in order to twist the rope, which was available here. The graves had never been cleared on a large scale until 1933, when an area for

carriers was constructed here. Any mortal remains left were removed during the excavation for a parking garage in 2005. Since the completion of the garage the following year this area has been used for events. The ropewalk had long disappeared by then.

The unknown artist also gives a view of the backside of the buildings of the narrow Heer Ivostraatje, with Gemeenteschool nr 5 all the way on the right. The houses here were later torn down, but in 2017-2018 the new *Lân fan Taal* language centre was established here.

THE AREA FOR CARRIERS NEAR THE OLDEHOVE

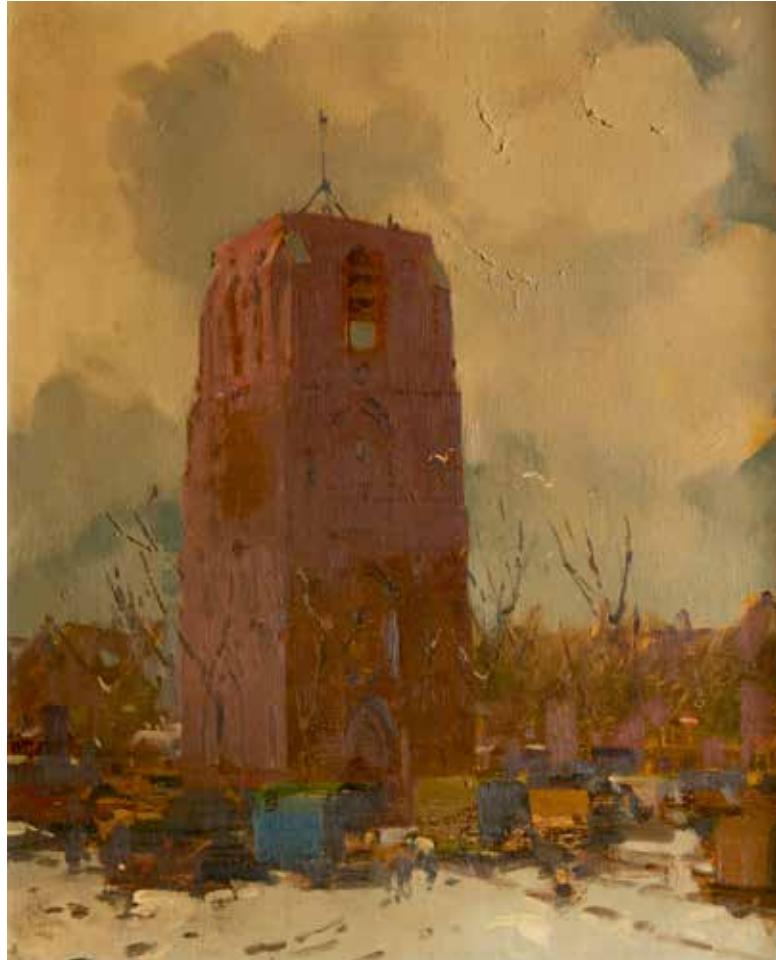
Piet van der Hem, 1935-1940, oil on canvas

The Oldehoofster Churchyard has fulfilled many different functions. For centuries, until its closing in 1833, it was the churchyard for the previously demolished St. Vitus Church. There was some commotion during the clearing of the churchyard about the removal of the graves and gravestones of many of the city's leading families.

In 1838 a walking garden was built, part of which was given a new purpose after the construction in 1862 of a school for the poor. Until 1933 the area stood practically abandoned; ropewalks were built and children played there. In that year the school was torn down and the area was made suitable as a centre for regional freight transport.

The many barges that had formerly populated the city canals now made room for motorised transport by road. A network of regular carrier services tied the city to the surrounding villages and to cities far outside its boundaries. The center of all this was this carrier area. The area above ground was made suitable for events.

Piet van der Hem (Wirdum 1885 – The Hague 1961) painted the carrier area at a time when it was still fully in use. Like many Frisian artists, he received his education in Amsterdam. Afterward he lived in Paris for a year. He then made a number of large trips, including to Spain and Russia, the influence of which can be found in his work. He eventually settled in The Hague. He made many political drawings for the *Nieuwe Amsterdammer* and the *Haagse Post*



periodicals. He also made many portraits of the elite between World War I and II. He returned to Friesland regularly, drawing and painting there.





PRINCESSEHOF

Jacobus Versteegen, 1785, drawing in pen, brush and ink

By 1785, the year in which Versteegen made this drawing, there was no longer any member of the princely family of Orange residing in the Princessehof (Princess's Court). Princess Maria Louise van Hessen-Kassel (Kassel 1688 – Leeuwarden 1765), the widow of the Frisian Stadholder Johan Willem Friso (Dessau 1687 - Strijensas 1711), lived here until her death in 1765. Johan Willem Friso van Nassau-Dietz, hereditary Stadholder of Friesland and Prince of Orange after the death of his cousin, King-Stadholder Willem III (The Hague 1650 – London 1702), drowned in 1711 near the village of Moerdijk when he was crossing the Hollands Diep river. His son, Prince Willem IV (Leeuwarden 1711 – The Hague 1751), would later become stadholder of all the provinces of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. When Willem IV was declared of age in 1731, Princess Maria Louise left the Stadhouders Hof and moved to an already existing property on Grote Kerkstraat. This property was made up of a number of older buildings, including the 15th-16th century Papingastins (a former

villa or stronghold particular to Friesland). She had the complex modernized and this is the house we see on the left of this drawing.

The property would later be split into three again. In 1898 Maurits Cornelis Esscher (Leeuwarden 1898 – Hilversum 1972), famous for his graphic works based on geometric principles, was born in the middle section. Today it houses the Princessehof Ceramics Museum.

Jacobus Versteegen (Amsterdam 1735 - 1795) used a sketch made much earlier, circa 1750, by Cornelis Pronk (Amsterdam 1691 - 1759). Versteegen adapted the drawing as far as was necessary. An engraving was made of his drawing for a book illustration. Versteegen was an artist from Amsterdam. In the 18th century many illustrated publications on the Netherlands were produced there. It was thus mainly artists from Amsterdam who travelled to the various provinces in order to make their sketches. It was also customary for artists to use their colleagues' drawings for their own work, as Versteegen did with Pronk's.

VIEW OF THE OOSTER CHURCH ON HOEKSTERPAD

Jerre Hakse, 1981, drawing in pen, brush and ink



Jerre Hakse (Leeuwarden 1937) drew the Reformed Ooster Church on Hoeksterpad (road) shortly before it was demolished. In the same year the church was replaced with a somewhat dull apartment building. The car park in the foreground, where the gas works once stood, has also disappeared. Today there is a parking garage with an adjoining supermarket built in the

shape of the old bastion, levelled in the 19th century, next to the former Hoekster poort (gate).

The Ooster Church was not the city's first Reformed church. The first had been built in 1842 on the corner of Vijzelstraat and Noorderweg (road), but it quickly no longer met the demands of a growing community. It was decided to found a new

church on Hoeksterpad; it was officially opened in 1859. This building later underwent numerous changes, only to eventually be demolished.

Jerre Hakse drew the church in his characteristically expressive style, which gives a good impression of this somewhat austere structure.

HOEKSTERPAD

Johannes Elsinga, 1967, drawing in pen, brush in greys and whites



Until the 1980s, the row of houses on Hoeksterpad (road) had a characteristically high doorstep, a reminder of the defensive ramparts that once stood here. After the ramparts were levelled in the 19th century, the adjacent houses stood higher and doorsteps were necessary to access them. Today a striking, oval apartment building designed by the architect Gunnar Daan

(Plasmolen 1939 – Oosternijkerk 2016) is located here.

In the background one can see the tower of the St. Bonifatius Church, built in 1884 after a design by the famous architect Pierre Cuypers (Roermond 1827 – 1921), whose designs include the Rijksmuseum and Centraal Station in Amsterdam. The Bonifatius Church tower, visible from

afar to anyone approaching Leeuwarden, was the highest building in the city until the Achmea tower was built in 2002. Johannes Elsinga (Wommels 1893 – Leeuwarden 1969) drew this wintry view before the houses definitively disappeared. Like Andries van der Sloot, he received his education in The Hague, and he can be considered a follower of the Hague School.

VIEW OF BREDEPLAATS, WITH THE GROTE KERK IN THE BACKGROUND

Cor Reisma, circa 1955, oil on canvas

Cor Reisma (Steenwijk 1902 – Leeuwarden 1962) painted his view of the Grote Church at a time when this neighbourhood was going through many changes: the neighbourhoods near the *Wissedwinger* (bastion) were torn down and somewhat later Groeneweg (road) was widened, whereby sections of the development on the north and south side of Nieuweburen (street) also disappeared. This changed the course of Noorderweg and Nieuweburen streets.

Today there are roundabouts on Noorderweg near Hoeksterend (street) and near the Stedelijke Gymnasium secondary school.

The view here is from Opgang - a small street that led to the Wissedwinger - in the direction of Breedeplaats (street). The properties along Nieuweburen and on the left side of Breedeplaats were replaced in de 1970s by new, historicising buildings. Reisma thus painted a situation that is no longer easily recognizable.

The painter's characteristic use of colour has made the view almost cheerful, with on the right a car typical of the 1950s.

The Grote Kerk still has its cupola, placed there by the city architect Thomas Romein (Leeuwarden 1811-1881) around 1830. On an interesting note, the Grote Kerk contains stained glass windows designed by Cor Reisma after World War II.

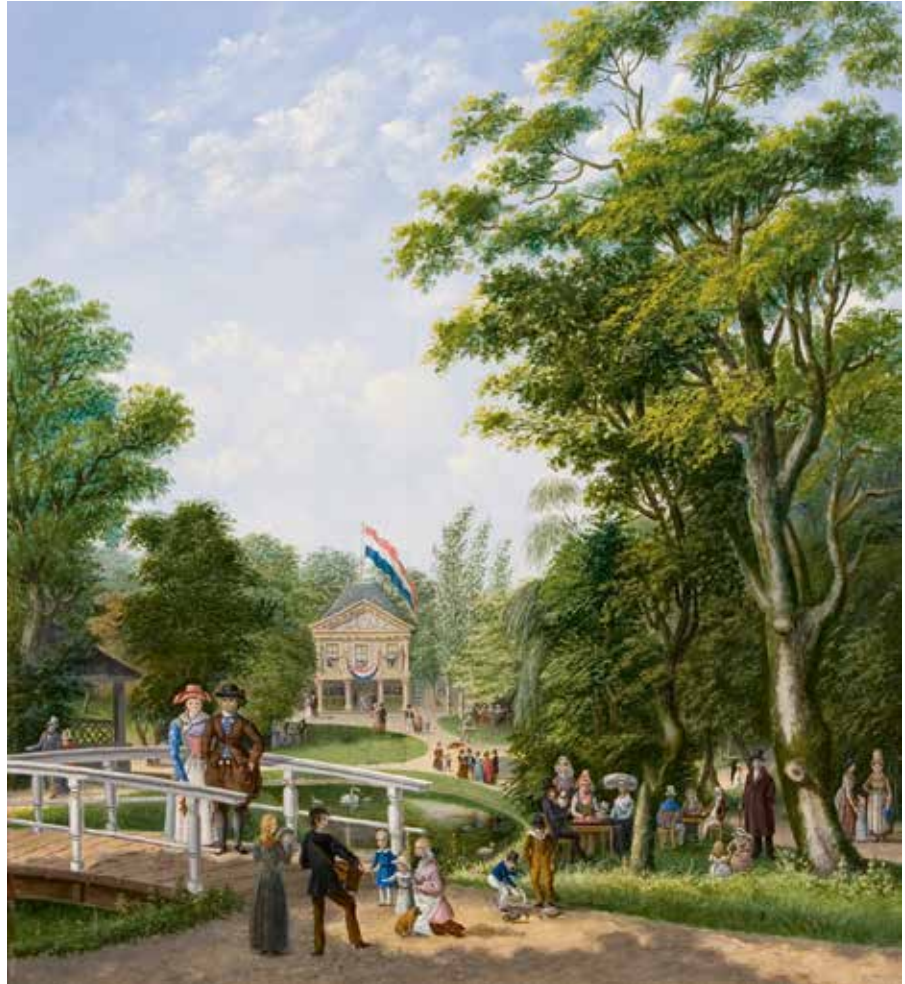


DE PRINSENTUIN

Jacob Bonga, circa 1820, oil on panel

Willem Frederik (Arnhem 1613 – Leeuwarden 1664), who in 1648 asked for permission from the city's authorities to construct a pleasure garden on the *Doeledwinger* (bastion). Plants, including orange and jasmine trees, were delivered by ship. Later that century (1692) a summer house was built, which can more or less still be seen in this painting by Jacob Bonga: a building of two storeys with pillars, crowned with a triangular pediment. The garden was constructed in the so-called French style, with stark, geometric shapes. During the French period the garden was expropriated and opened up to *respectable gentlemen* as a place to relax. After the restoration of the House of Orange, King Willem I definitively transferred the garden in 1819 to the city of Leeuwarden. The garden was then redesigned in a romantic style, with winding footpaths and ponds. Jacob Bonga probably painted his view of Prinsentuin shortly after its transformation in 1820. It was most likely a holiday: the national flag is flying above the former summer house in the background, and people are posing in their Sunday best. The couple on the little bridge are strikingly dressed in traditional Hindelooper clothing, which was not common in Leeuwarden.

Jacob Bonga was a truly Frisian artist. He was born in 1758 in Dokkum. Like many painters, he probably first trained as a regular house painter. In 1817



he is listed in Leeuwarden as a *verver* (dyer). He lived here with his unmarried daughter, Dieuwke, and sons, Sjoerd and Klaas, until his death in 1848.

Colophon

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Leeuwarden is the Cultural Capital of Europe in 2018. For this occasion the most beautiful works of art with the Frisian capital as their subject have been collected in *Leeuwarden. The most beautiful city views from 1600 to now*. Take a walk from the entrance of De Boterhoek street (Andries van der Sloot) to the Prinsentuin park (Cor Reisma, Jacob Banga), stop at the Tuinster water gate, the Chancellery on Turfmarkt street (Cornelis Springer) and continue down to Gedempte Keizersgracht street (Pieter D. Torensma). Compare, with this book in your hand, former and present times.

The Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden takes advantage of this celebratory year of culture to present to the public a selection of the finest paintings, prints and drawings made of Leeuwarden from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the present. Never before have so many cityscapes been brought together at the same time. Painters and draftsmen from then and now show the wealth and poverty of the historical city centre; the gems and the rotten bits, the buildings which have been preserved and those which no longer exist.

Leeuwarden. The most beautiful city views from 1600 to now is an essential book for anyone who has anything to do with Leeuwarden.



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