

COLNAGHI

Leonardo da Vinci inv.



Wenceslaus Hollar

*Two Deformed Heads with Very Long Upper Lips, c. 1645*



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WENCESLAUS HOLLAR, after LEONARDO DA VINCI  
(Prague 1607 – 1677 London)

*TWO DEFORMED HEADS WITH VERY LONG UPPER LIPS*, c. 1645

Etching on laid paper  
8.6 x 12.4 cm.; 3 3/8 x 4 7/8 in.

Signed in the plate (upper centre): *Leonardo da Vinci inv. W. Hollar Fecit.*  
First state of two.

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## Provenance

German private collection.

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## Literature

R. Pennington, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Etched Work of Wenceslaus Hollar 1607–1677*, Cambridge 1982, cat no. 1593.I.

S. Turner, *Wenceslaus Hollar: New Hollstein German engravings, etchings and woodcuts, 1400–1700*. Giulia Bartrum, vols. 1–9, 2009–2012, cat. no. 747.I.



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Hollar left his native Prague in 1627. He spent several years travelling and working in Germany before his patron, the Earl of Arundel brought him to London in 1636. It is during this time that Hollar engraved, amongst other works, the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci from the Arundel collection. During the civil wars, Hollar fought on the royalist side, after which he spent the years 1644-52 in Antwerp. Hollar's views of London form an important record of the city before the Great Fire of 1666. Among his most ambitious projects was a set of plates of women's costumes, entitled *Ornatus muliebris Anglicanus, or The severall habits of English women from the nobilities to the country woman* (1640). He was prolific and engraved a wide range of subjects, producing nearly 2,800 prints, numerous watercolours and many drawings.

Hollar presents two grotesque heads in strict profile, confronted across a narrow interval of blank paper. At left, a figure - cropped at the shoulders - wears a voluminous cap or coif that balloons behind the skull; the facial features are wilfully distorted into a swollen, beak-like nose and an overhanging upper lip, the small eye set deep beneath a heavy brow. At right, a male head with swept-back hair and a prominent ear is pressed forward into an almost simian silhouette: the forehead and nasal bridge form a continuous, knotted ridge, while the mouth and chin collapse into a massive, pendulous projection.

The print belongs to Hollar's Antwerp series after Leonardo's studies of "grotesque" heads. Hollar's etched line translates Leonardo's physiognomic "counter-images" of ideal beauty into crisply articulated form, using tight parallel hatching and short, stabbing strokes to model leathery skin, sagging flesh, and bony planes; diagonal background shading locks the profiles into sharp relief. Leonardos's original drawings circulated in the Arundel collection and are now largely in the Royal Collection, Windsor.

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