

COLNAGHI

Leonara
W. Hollar fecit



Wenceslaus Hollar

A female with hair tied back and a bald male facing each other, 1645

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WENCESLAUS HOLLAR
(Prague 1607 – 1677 London)

A FEMALE WITH HAIR TIED BACK AND A BALD MALE FACING EACH OTHER, 1645

Etching on laid paper
12.3 x 13.7 cm.; 4 7/8 x 5 3/8 in.

Signed and dated in the plate (upper centre): *Leonardo da Vinci inu: / W: Hollar fecit. 1645.*
First state of three.

Provenance

German private collection.

Literature

R. Pennington, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Etched Work of Wenceslaus Hollar 1607–1677*, Cambridge 1982, cat no. 1596.I.
S. Turner, *Wenceslaus Hollar: New Hollstein German engravings, etchings and woodcuts, 1400–1700*. Giulia Bartrum, vols. 1–9, 2009–2012, cat. no. 744.II.



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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 sets two bust-length profiles in a taut, confrontational pairing: at left, a youthful woman with hair gathered beneath a tall, wrapped head-dress and a low, square neckline; at right, an older bald man with strongly modelled cheek, jaw and neck, his features tightened into an unsmiling mask. The sheet belongs to Hollar's celebrated *Varie Figuræ et Probæ*, the celebrated Antwerp series after Leonardo's studies of "grotesque" heads - drawings that circulated in the Arundel collection and are now largely in the Royal Collection, Windsor - translating Leonardo's probing physiognomic distortions into the precise, reproducible language of etching.

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