

Leonardo da Vinci

# COLNAGHI



Wenceslaus Hollar

*Two deformed heads facing each other, 1645*



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

*TWO DEFORMED HEADS FACING EACH OTHER*, 1645

Etching on laid paper  
7.8 x 11.7 cm.; 3 1/8 x 4 5/8 in.

Signed and inscribed in the plate (upper left and upper right): *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. 1595.I (noted p. 275).

S. Turner, *Wenceslaus Hollar: New Hollstein German engravings, etchings and woodcuts, 1400–1700*. Giulia Bartrum, vols. 1–9, 2009–2012, cat. no. 748.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.

At left, an elderly woman is rendered with a sharply hooked nose, a pendulous lower lip and an improbably projecting chin; a cord encircles her head, securing a spiralled “horn” or shell-like appendage that reads as an absurd, anachronistic headpiece. Opposite her, a bald old man - his brow creased and cheeks slack - presents an inflated upper lip and compressed mouth, the heavy folds around the jaw and neck intensified by dense, directional hatching.

The print belongs to Hollar's 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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## COLNAGHI *London*

26 BURY STREET, LONDON SW1Y 6AL  
UNITED KINGDOM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
10AM-6PM

+44 (0)20 7491 7408

[contact@colnaghi.com](mailto:contact@colnaghi.com)

## COLNAGHI *Madrid*

CALLE GENERAL CASTAÑOS 9  
PLANTA BAJA, DCHA.  
28004 MADRID

MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
BY APPOINTMENT

[spain@colnaghi.com](mailto:spain@colnaghi.com)

## COLNAGHI *New York*

23 EAST 67TH STREET, FOURTH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10065  
USA

MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
10AM-6PM

+1 (917) 388-3825

[newyork@colnaghi.com](mailto:newyork@colnaghi.com)

## COLNAGHI *Brussels*

RUE JACQUES JORDAENS 30  
1000 BRUXELLES  
BELGIUM

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

[brussels@colnaghi.com](mailto:brussels@colnaghi.com)