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Recent acquisition

BIKES IN THE ARCHIVES

Surrounded by the milling throng of passers-by on their way to and from Delft station, Mark van Huystee spent some 45 hours making the drawing that formed the basis for the giclée print acquired last year by the Image and Sound department of the Municipal Archives. Working on site, he recorded the chaotic mass of parked bicycles against the backdrop of the Van Leeuwenhoeksingel, scheduled for demolition to make way for the new railway tunnel, its facades then (2009) in the process of being painted blue as part of an art project. To the left of the expanse of brightly coloured bicycles part of the station is visible as a train prepares to depart. To the right is the Westvest, along which a tram is moving. The drawing is incredibly detailed. In addition to an enormous variety of bicycles and bicycle parts, Van Huystee included such details as foraging jackdaws, discarded food wrappers, security cameras and passers-by. There appears to be no end to the amount of visual information in the drawing. The image also contains an optical anomaly that reflects the time it took Van Huystee to make the drawing: the same greyish-green bicycle lock appears in two different places due to the fact that the artist at one point changed position. What is so special about the way Van Huystee works is not only that he sits outside just like topographical draughtsmen used to do in days gone by, but also that he puts his observations straight to paper using pen and ink rather than first doing a pencil sketch. The panoramic size means that he spends several days on each drawing, which as a result becomes a patchwork of snapshots. Even though the perspective sometimes becomes distorted as the artist changes position, the way the drawing represents the location with its buildings

and their surroundings is still pretty close to nature. The way in which a topographical drawing has captured a specific period in recent memory makes this image a valuable addition to the topographical collection.

Once the pen and ink drawing is finished, Van Huystee makes a digital scan of it. He then uses a computer to add the colours to each of the minute segments, one by one; a true labour of love which for this drawing took him about ninety hours. The digital colour drawing is then printed in a limited edition using a printing technique based on ink-jet technology and pigment-based inks. The result, known as a giclée print, combines a high print quality with long-term colour stability. The special inks produce a colour saturation and surface texture comparable with those of a screen print. The bicycle lot at the Van Leeuwenhoeksingel used to be an instantly recognisable feature of Delft for anyone walking to or from the station, a phenomenon typical of a town with a large student population. The actual view may have disappeared now that the bicycles have been moved and the buildings demolished, but the iconic image has been recorded for posterity in a unique way.

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Giclée from pen and ink drawing, 55 × 153 cm, Mark van Huystee, 2009