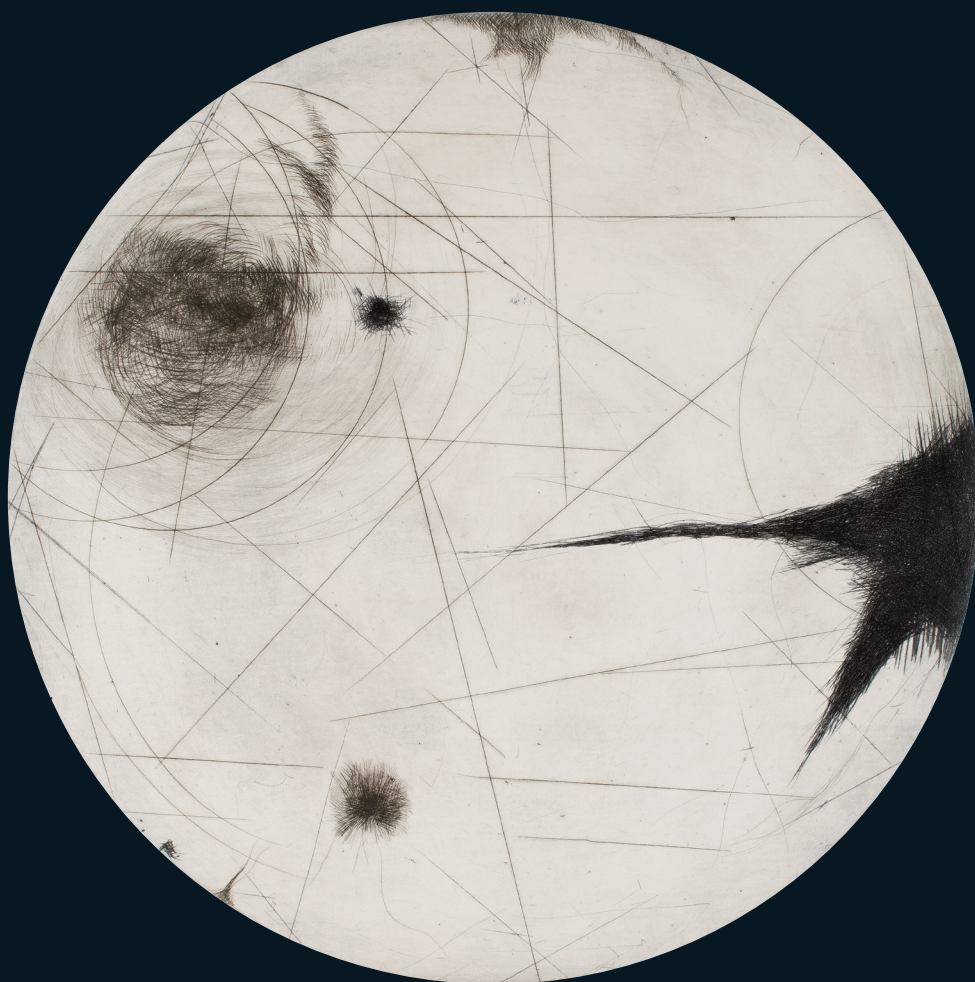


# TRILOGY ABOUT SEVERAL URBAN VIEW AND LANDSCAPE PRINTS

M. Rosa Vives





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**UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA**

Edicions

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# PREFACE

## Views of the City and Views in the City

City views have drawn attention in all-powerful ways. Let me emphasise the concept *powerful*. In the 16th century, Philip II, the powerful king of Spain, was well aware that it was impossible to map the empire on a scale of one to one, as Borges would later caricature in *The Rigor of Science*. But he also understood that chorography had the potential to become an effective instrument to control his territories. City views enabled him to have an overall perspective of his possessions and recreate an image of power and control over half the globe.

But city views also attracted the attention of the nascent middle and commercial classes. It was a form of travelling, of getting to know the world without leaving home by simply thumbing through magnificent books of views. The popularisation of the printing press made a notable contribution to those books, and an entire publishing industry developed around the production of views. Various printing processes were used, and even coloured prints could be obtained. The drawing artist would go, whenever possible, to a high vantage point to get an overall view of the city, make sketches and then compose the view, most likely in a cooperative effort with the engraver.

The views created during this early stage denote a certain will for objectivity, although subject to acts of artistic freedom, which range from adapting the depiction of urban artefacts – generally drawn with the idea of reproducing the “type” of a building, church or cathedral – to eliminating elements that disturb the composition, and even changing the location of some urban features.

The extensive dissemination of views enabled the emergence of copying, if not plagiarism, and, more seriously, manipulation of the very content of the image. Perhaps one of the most well-known cases, partly thanks to its inclusion in the book *Delirious New*

*York* by Rem Koolhaas, is that of the French engraver Gérard Jollain. In 1672, he published a view of New Amsterdam, the present-day New York, which is actually an image of Lisbon, based on the original engraving in the series *Civitates orbis terrarum* (1572 – 1617). *Civitates* was published in six volumes, which appeared in succession in 1572, 1575, 1581, 1588, 1598 and 1617, and was reprinted and republished on numerous occasions and in many countries. The undertaking was managed by George Braun, who held the post of what today would be called *editor*, while Franz Hogenberg was the main engraver for the series. A large number of reporters, artists and collaborators made up the team, which means that the original drawings were made by several artists. Of these, it is worth highlighting Georges Hoefnagel, a Flemish artist who travelled to many countries to compose his views. The fascination for city views also attracted painters, from El Greco to Canaletto and Guardi of the Venetian school of the *vedute*.

A specific line of chorography is that of the prospective rulers (princes and kings), whose training included travelling to the European capitals, accompanied by artists who wrote the contents of the royals' travel journals. One example is Lorenzo Magalotti, who accompanied Cosimo de' Medici on his journey around Spain and Portugal in 1668 and 1669.

In addition to bird's-eye view images, painters, sketchers and engravers also explored the creation of close-range depictions of the urban landscape, framing details of the urban composition (such as buildings, parks and scenes) that highlight a city's attractive, interesting and picturesque aspects. Those fortunate enough to go on the Grand Tour had at their disposal this kind of guide books that advised them about *what* they had to see. Gradually, objectivity yielded to ways of seeing betokened by the zeitgeist, by the vision of remote times and ruins, as in Piranesi's famous *vedute* of Rome, which are still being reissued today and are a profitable business in the print selling market.

In the 19th century, travel became a real possibility thanks to the advances made in means of transport and the consolidation of the urban middle classes, while photography contributed to the development of a thriving industry of bird's-eye view prints – recall the image of Nadar flying in a hot air balloon and photographing Paris. Artists no longer needed to climb a nearby mountain to obtain views, they simply had to get into a hot air balloon along with a photographer who would take still pictures of the city, and make notes; later, back in the workshop, the artist would finish the composition of the view that was to become a full-colour lithographic print. This is exactly what the French architect, engraver and lithographer Alfred Guesdon did in the mid-19th century to create his lithographs of various European cities for publication in the Paris magazine *L'Illustration*, *Journal Universel*.

The rapid rise of the illustrated magazine in the 19th century took place alongside profound changes in urban organisation, in the structure and morphology of the cities of the first and second waves of industrialisation. Those transformations were disseminated thanks to the prints made by a pleiad of artists associated with the industrial sector of the printing press. The picturesque views and the chorography of specific features eventually became prominent features of advertising material, first that of the Universal Exhibitions and later in efforts to attract foreign visitors to the cities.

This evolution of city views occurred alongside an evolution in the procedures used to transfer drawings and produce a print on paper. Chalcography engraving gradually replaced the woodcut, but then lithography took over from both until, following the use of offset, views began to be reproduced by photographic procedures. Photographic chorography has dominated the world of city depiction, from the 19th century to the present day, in both analogue form, and electronically or digitally.

Throughout the 19th century, the period of artistic genres and Impressionism, many painters specialised in the creation of city views. In contrast to the almost cartographic description of space, and to the realism and architectural precision of their fellow engravers who worked for the media, these painters enhanced aspects of the setting of the depicted landscape. They portrayed human environments, including the interiors of the new communal locations (cabarets, restaurants, bars...), and the urban environments formed by the new promenades, railway stations, ports and parks. With painters having freed themselves from cartographic description, their novel views were dominated by the distinctive language of painting itself, the treatment of light through colour. Many of these artists also experimented with engravings of views using a more expressive and creative approach.

The fascination with the bird's-eye view of the city takes us back to the passages of the New Testament which describe how the devil tempts Jesus: "[...] *et dixit illi haec tibi omnia dabo si cadens adoraveris me*" ([...] and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me"; Matthew 4:9). *Tibi dabo* gives name to the magic mountain of Barcelona, the ancient Roman Hill of the Eagle – one of the most preeminent viewpoints of Barcelona. Viewpoints, whether natural sites or built structures, such as the Santa Justa viewpoint in Lisbon, were a new urban artefact of the 19th century, offering views over the city and ... to the viewfinders of cameras. Sometime later, the aeroplane and the helicopter transformed chorography into aerial cartography, which eventually took us to Google Earth, whose "chorographic cartography" on demand enables us to place ourselves on the cartographic plane (the map) and on the chorographic plane (3D views and street-level photographic views).



This new form of virtual tourism receives contributions from the entertainment industry – from cinema to television and Netflix – which is constantly presenting us with views of US cities, and as a result, today we are more familiar with the skyline of Los Angeles, New York or Washington than that of our own city. In his 1967 film *Playtime*, Jacques Tati, apart from creating Tativille on the outskirts of Paris, had the idea of pointing to a new mode of chorographical vision in movement: the bus with the transparent roof. Bit by bit, this vehicle grew higher, became a double decker, and now forms part of the repertoire of “synthetic views” on the hop-on hop-off routes of global tourism.

All of this and more is discussed in this book which, in the words of the author, arises from her long academic experience in which:

[...] teaching fuelled by research and, conversely, research fuelled by teaching and educational debate, have not only allowed me to transmit the insights I may have accumulated, but primarily, also, to study, open and expand my own expertise and to learn, aspiring to be able to transmit in a committed and honest way all that I may know and, above all, everything that may contribute to the body of knowledge.

During the last decade of her academic activity, Rosa Vives, professor of engraving at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Barcelona, held the posts of director of the Department of Arts-Conservation/Restoration, researcher at the POLIS Research Centre, and lecturer for the master's degree in Urban Design: Art, City, Society at the University of Barcelona, where she taught the subject Engravings of Villages and Cities.

As the reader will see, this publication is composed of three independent essays which stem from this extensive academic and research experience.

The first, *Landscape Prints Divided into Two: Canaletto, Goya and Hokusai*, deals with the

[...] special cases of landscapes which the artist or some other person has, for any of a variety of reasons, divided into several parts or split in half – the case we are dealing with here. Divisions may have been applied for different reasons: the sheer size of a composition such as a mural engraving, large or oversize, which was worked on using several modular plates that served to make prints on different sheets of paper that were joined together after the printing process to form the compositional whole; the reading layout, where, depending on the relationship of the engraving in large books or albums, the prints were included in folded form; the characteristics of the elements used, including the sizes of the plates, the sheets of paper and the presses; the need to make the most of the copper and other materials; or simply for reasons that we are unaware of.

The second essay of the trilogy, *From the Sign to the Double Image: Landscape/Face, Face/Landscape. On Several Prints by Picasso*, examines the landscapes that Picasso made in the south of France between 1947 and 1973, in which he explored the expressive potential of signs. The author points out that, while Picasso was not particularly given to representing views and landscapes, and even less so in engravings, his body of work includes some very interesting and highly original lithographs and linocuts, specifically *Vallauris Landscape* and *Gardens of Vallauris*, both from 1953, and *Tête de femme au chapeau/Paysage aux baigneuses et au pêcheur* from 1962.

The study of the latter, a linoleum print catalogued as “unfinished” and as a rare item in Picasso’s output, raises the question, “Is it a portrait of a young woman with a hat, showing a face that is made up of a landscape animated by bathers and a fisherman with his boat, or is it an animated landscape that is giving shape to an attractive face?” To answer the question, the essay delves into “figurative cartography” and the analysis of what the surrealists labelled the “Arcimboldo effect”.

The third essay, *Repertoire of Urban Views of the Paris of 1900. The Etchings of Joaquín Sunyer*, is based on the article “Joaquim Sunyer: Urban Prints of the Paris of 1900”,<sup>1</sup> which the author presented at the 2018 seminar Theories of Representation.

In the Paris of the early 20th century, the Catalan engraver Joaquín Sunyer recorded a variety of facets of public spaces and everyday urban life. The author maintains that, “given the quality of his work and the interest of the subject matter, Sunyer deserves to be examined more closely than he has been up to now”.

Sunyer left Spain to avoid being drafted for the country’s colonial wars in Cuba and the Philippines, and took up residence in Paris, where he got to know the colony of Catalan artists living in the *cit  de la lumi re*. In his career as an engraver, Sunyer produced a large body of etchings, including pieces in colour. The subject matter of these works consists of views of the city and scenes from everyday life in the public space and other collective places, to which he adds extensive portrayals of popular characters.

This third essay also presents a comparison between the views created by Sunyer and those recorded photographically by artists such as Atget, List, Kertesz, Cartier Bresson, and Doisneau. A curious detail is that several images in this essay remind us that, a hundred years ago, Paris was a river port.

<sup>1</sup> Vives Piqu , R. (2018). “Joaquim Sunyer: estampas urbanas del Paris del 1900”. on the *w@terfront. Public Art. Urban Design. Civic Participation. Urban Regeneration*, 60(13).

Video taken from <http://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/waterfront/article/view/26094>. This video-document was a part of the Theories of Representation seminar organised by the POLIS Research Centre in June 2018, as a tribute to Dr Lino Cabezas, another researcher at the centre, on the occasion of his retirement.

## TRILOGY ABOUT SEVERAL URBAN VIEW AND LANDSCAPE PRINTS

Although independent of each other, the three essays form a thematic whole that centres on the study of certain prints which share the landscape and the urban view as their main subject matter. The essays, consistently well-documented, examine various works by a range of artists, from the perspectives of contextualisation, documentation, and the creative and iconographic links with other authors and other mediums, particularly photography.

These essays certify the relevance of the decision we made almost a decade ago to include the subject Engravings of Villages and Cities in the syllabus of the interdisciplinary master's degree in Urban Design at the University of Barcelona. The eye of a person who is both an artist – perfectly familiar with the processes of engraving – and an able researcher in the field of engravings representing villages and cities, has been of singular value in the formulation of Urban Design studies and a great contribution to the training of those who, whether professionally or academically, want to dedicate themselves to “creating the city”.

In application of the rules of the retirement process, Rosa Vives is no longer a member of staff at the University of Barcelona, but fortunately her personal ties make it possible to maintain a relationship with the Research Centre. In this regard, I choose to see this trilogy not as a farewell upon her retreat from academic life, but rather as the beginning of a new stage, which we hope will bring us more artistic work and more research.

ANTONI REMESAR

Director, POLIS Research Centre  
Coordinator, master's degree in  
Urban Design: Art, City, Society

# INTRODUCTION

These three essays, independent of each other, centre on the observation of certain prints which, for a variety of conceptual, formal, historical and technical reasons, have especially awakened our interest. Overall, the main subject matters are the landscape and the urban view, which form the basis for reflection on contextualisation, documentation and creative and iconographic links with other authors and with other mediums, particularly photography. These aspects have allowed us to think about, and rethink, not only the nature of the images, but also the intimate links the engraving has had, in the field of plasticity, with humanistic culture and society throughout different periods. In addition, the exercise has led to the presentation of several previously unpublished pieces, such as a drawing by Jean Cocteau and several prints by Joaquim Sunyer. With this work, we want to celebrate a long-lasting academic dedication to research and teaching, accompanied by Canaletto, Goya, Hokusai, Picasso, Joaquim Sunyer, and several others.

To be sure, a large number of the ideas put forward here arose during lectures delivered over the past few academic years within the master's degree in Urban Design: Art, City, Society at the University of Barcelona. The sessions were dedicated to the study of prints of outdoor views, made before the advent of photography. We focused specifically on landscapes and views of towns and cities, and examined how they were represented in the West, considering images ranging from the Symbolist landscape to the urban views of the late 19th and early 20th century under the lens of photography. During the study, we brought up for debate not only the aspects specific to historiographic and iconographic documentation, but also the conceptual and formal ideas, their temporal validity among antecedents and sequents and technical processes. At the same time, special emphasis was given to the importance of the functionality of the print alongside its creative aesthetic values. Print has been, and still is, a means of expression and representation, with a language of its own, with its own particular technology and a sensory form of expression and

communication that served as a driver of the expansion of images and, therefore, of culture.

Teaching fuelled by research and, conversely, research fuelled by teaching and educational debate, have not only allowed me to transmit the insights I may have accumulated, but primarily, also, to study, open and expand my own expertise and to learn, aspiring to be able to transmit in a committed and honest way all that I may know and, above all, everything that may contribute to the body of knowledge. The group of students – from Portugal, Italy, Mexico, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Ecuador, Syria, Iran, United Arab Emirates, China, and a few from Spain – was highly heterogeneous in terms of education and cultural background and, when faced with their questions and comments, some of which I had not even considered myself, I was forced to engage in stimulating self-reflection during the preparation of the sessions and in the efforts towards reasoned, contrasted, clear and understandable instruction. Therefore, the challenge of attracting the interest of these students, beyond the generalities, was one of the most rewarding experiences in my career and for this I will always be grateful to the supervisor of this master's degree, Dr Antonio Remesar, who entrusted me with teaching the course and at all times assisted us with all our needs.

Now the time has come to retire from academic life, to take stock of my dedication to teaching and research (and, no less important, to free myself of academic paperwork!), we all become aware of how much we have learned thanks to our teachers and our students. Teaching is really, as George Steiner put it, a kind of allegory of selfless love, a love which, I must say, I too received from excellent teachers. They gave me the tools to acquire knowledge, to know how to direct my gaze, to piece together comprehensive opinions, to study, practice, research, and teach. Most particularly, to teach about the art of engraving, in which life seems to have made me a specialist. And so, other than just a simple poetic expression of gratitude, I owe a real heartfelt *thank you* to my old professors, my young students, my colleagues, the service and administrative staff at the UB and my friends. Thank you to all, and... I hope our paths will cross again!

M. ROSA VIVES  
September 2019

## / I. Landscape Prints Divided into Two: Canaletto, Goya and Hokusai

La lama delle falce incontrò il libro e lo tagliò di netto in due metà per il lungo. La parte della costola restò in mano al Buono, e la parte del taglio si sparse in mille mezze pagine per l'aria...

Le pagine del Tasso con i margini bianchi e i versi *dimezzati valorano sul vento e si posarono sui rami dei pini, sulle erbe e sull' acqua dei torrenti.*

ITALO CALVINO. *Il visconte dimezzato* (1952)

Throughout the history of printmaking, it is not unusual to find special cases of landscapes which the author or some other person has, for any of a variety of reasons, divided into several parts or, simply, split in half – the case we are dealing with here. Before all else, it should be noted that divisions may have been applied for different reasons: the sheer size of a composition such as a mural-size print, large or oversize,<sup>1</sup> which was worked on using several modular plates that served to make prints on different sheets of paper that were joined together after the printing process to form the compositional whole; the reading layout, where, depending on the relationship of the print in large books or albums, the prints were included in folded form; the characteristics of the elements used, including the sizes of the plates, the sheets of paper and the presses; the need to make the most of the copper and other materials, or for other reasons that we are unaware of.

These works are often panoramas or views which, once divided into two halves, can still be interpreted as a whole, including those which were divided after they were printed. In those, despite the fact that the fracture means that a few millimetres of physical continuity are lost, it is the plate mark, especially in chalcography, that

<sup>1</sup> Lilian Armstrong, Suzanne Boorsch, Stephen Goddard and Alison Stewart. *Grand Scale. Monumental prints in the age of Dürer and Titian.* (Larry Silver and Elizabeth Wyckoff, eds.). New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008.

frames the unbroken outline of the landscape, a role that is also occupied by the margins of the paper, which may be wider or narrower, depending on the times. From among many examples, suffice it to call to mind the spectacular *View of Venice* by Jacopo de' Barbari (1500), a masterpiece in the history of woodcutting and of city view prints.<sup>2</sup> It is impressively large, measuring 132.7 × 281.1 cm, and made up of six blocks of wood which, fortunately, are now preserved in the Correr Museum in Venice (figs. 1 and 2).

We can also highlight a preceding work on the same subject matter, but of lesser proportions, the *View of Venice* (1486) by Erhard Reuwich. This image, which is associated with the famous book by Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (ca. 1505), is a composition on eight blocks of wood which together have a total measurement of 31 × 103 cm. A short time later, in 1527, Dürer made the engraving *A Siege of a Fortress* (fig. 3), which is included in his book *Treatise on Fortifications*.<sup>3</sup>

The woodcut, measuring 22.6 × 72.3 cm, is carved into two wooden blocks and has a fillet delimiting the composition of each half. In other words, the work was intentionally made in this manner, without hiding the partition, in the same way as in oriental, Chinese, Korean and Japanese books produced in the butterfly format.<sup>4</sup> *The Triumphal Arch of Emperor Maximilian I* (1515), engraved by several authors under the supervision of Dürer, should not be overlooked here. Surely the greatest masterpiece of monumental and mural print,<sup>5</sup> its original edition was formed by 192 blocks, with the assembly as a whole measuring 357 × 295 cm. With regard to chalcographic engravings, smaller than the previous examples, but of great interest, it is worth mentioning *The Siege of Breda* (1628) by Jacques Callot, which depicts a great panoramic view with high topographical precision.<sup>6</sup> The etching is composed of six large copper

<sup>2</sup> L. Servolini. *Jacopo de' Barbari*. Padua, 1944; T. Pignatti, "La pianta di Venezia di Jacopo de' Barbari". *Bollettino dei Musei Civili Veneziani*, IX, 1964, pp. 9-49; Juergen Schulz, "Jacopo de' Barbari's View of Venice: Map Making, City Views, and Moralized Geography before the Year 1500", *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 60, no. 3 (Sep 1978), pp. 425-474.

<sup>3</sup> Albrecht Dürer, *Etliche underricht zu befestigung der Stett, Schlosz und Flecken*. Nuremberg, Hieronymus Andreae, 1527; Joseph Meder. *Dürer-Katalog*. New York, Da Capo Press, 1971, no. 272.

<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of prints in books also entailed the need for modules inserted between pages and texts. For more details on assembled engravings, see, particularly: Stephen Goddard, "Modular prints. A special case of the assembled woodcut in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries", in *Grand Scale. Monumental prints in the age of Dürer and Titian*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 87-97.

<sup>5</sup> Adam von Bartsch. *Illustrated Bartsch*. (Walter L. Strauss, ed.). New York, Abaris Books, vol 10, no. 138; Friedrich W. H. Hollstein. *German engravings, etchings and woodcuts ca. 1400-1700*. Amsterdam, Menno Hertzberger, 1954(?), vol. 5, pp. 200-201.

<sup>6</sup> Jules Lieure. *Jacques Callot. Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre gravé*. San Francisco, Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1989, vol. I, no. 593.