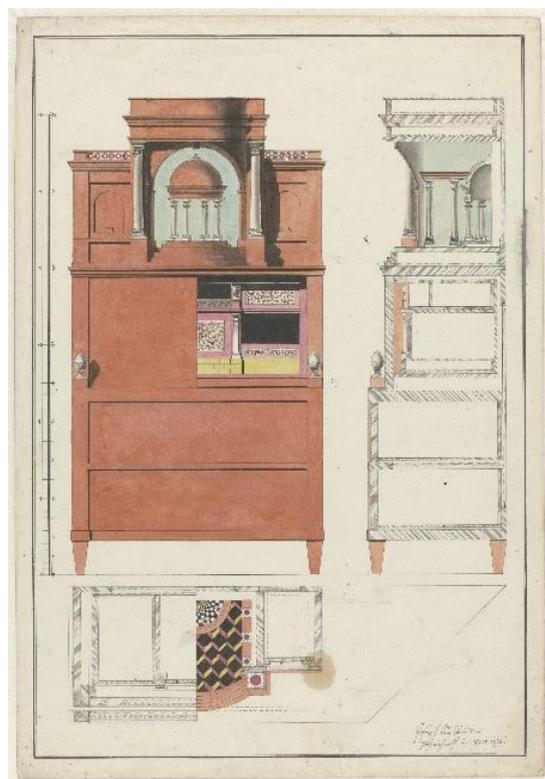




## PROCESS – Design Drawings from the Rijksmuseum.

Beginning 5 November at the Design Museum Den Bosch

This pioneering exhibition is an opportunity to discover a collection of extraordinary designs from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The marvellous drawings it includes date from the period 1500–1900 and have been brought together for the first time. They are arranged according to the various stages of the design process. The focus here is not on big artistic names, but on the crucial role that drawings have played in design. We get a close-up view of how the ideas for all manner of objects are formed, while also meeting their inventors, makers and commissioners. There are drawings of vases, chairs and clocks, of stoves, sledges and carriages – from the first rough pencil sketches to beautifully worked-up and colourful presentations. The drawings in this exhibition were acquired over the past ten years by the Rijksmuseum, where they belong to a special collection established by Senior Curator Reinier Baarsen. It is being shown here for the first time. The exhibition offers a unique insight into the role that drawing has played in the design process, as well as the superb drawings it has produced.



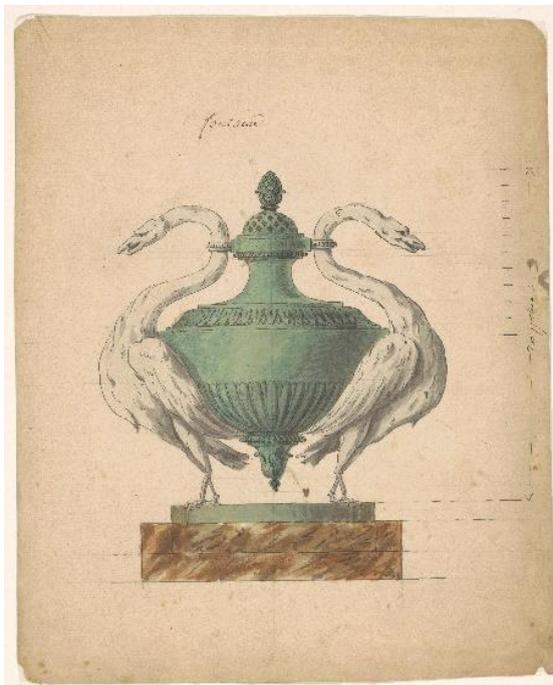
Left: Design for an ornamental jug, Hans Holbein (II), 1500–1600. Rijksmuseum collection

Right: Design for a secretaire, Joseph Nussbaumer (attribution rejected), 1816. Rijksmuseum collection

### **‘Design’ means ‘drawing’: then and now**

The word ‘design’ derives from *disegno*, Italian for ‘drawing’. Drawings were and remain an integral part of the process of conceiving, executing, selling and documenting design objects. Without them there would be no art and no design. A drawing is often the best way for a designer to communicate an idea to a client or to the person who will execute it. The exhibition clearly shows that beautiful objects from the period 1500–1900 were almost always conceived first of all on paper. Which, to repeat, is not all that different to how products are designed nowadays. When we think of design, we often think of a practice with its origins in the nineteenth century.

*PROCESS – Design Drawings from the Rijksmuseum* demonstrates, however, that the history of design stretches back much further than we imagine and is much richer than we often assume.



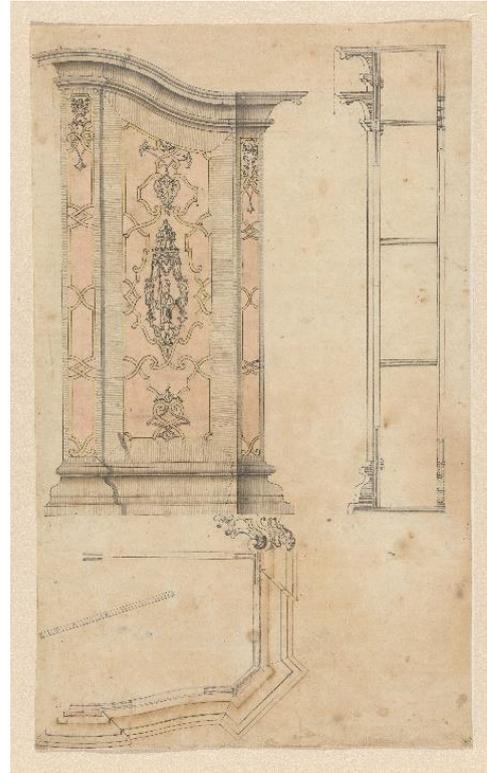
Left: Design drawing for a patinated bronze scent vase, anonymous, c. 1780. Rijksmuseum collection

Right: Design for a desk with display case, decorated with marquetry in the form of landscapes, anonymous, c. 1760–c. 1770. Rijksmuseum collection

### **The role of drawing**

The exhibition features the exceptional drawings of artefacts designed and made in the period 1500–1900. They are not presented as standalone works of art, but as part of the design and production process. To follow that process step by step, the exhibition is divided into twelve ‘chapters’, each dealing with a particular aspect of the process. The key question throughout is

what role did drawings play in this? And what is the relationship between the drawing and the object it depicts? This is the first time that design drawings from the period in question have been categorized and presented in this way. It creates a whole new perspective on the creative process and the role of drawing within it.

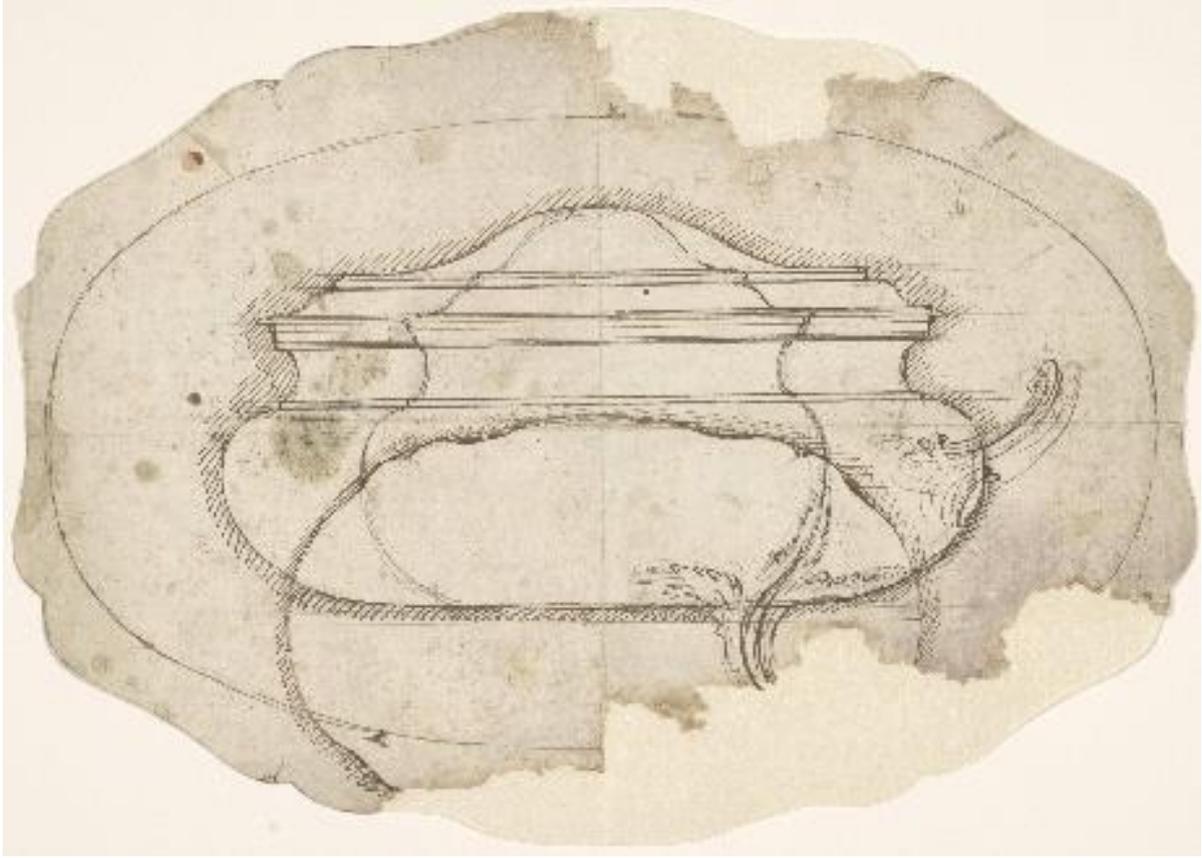


*Left: Designs for the handle of a staff or tap, anonymous, c. 1725–c. 1740. Rijksmuseum collection*

*Right: Design for a cabinet with marquetry in the form of a figure under a canopy, anonymous, c. 1740–c. 1750. Rijksmuseum collection*

### **From workshop to trade fair**

The different sections of the exhibition highlight the distinct functions that drawing fulfils within the design process. We see, for instance, how designers set their very first ideas down on paper to begin the whole design process. In other drawings, designers present two different versions of an object in the same drawing to show the client the available options. Design drawings also had a legal significance in the period 1500–1900. Important briefs, such as those for a church, did not allow much scope for the designer to deviate from the pre-approved drawing. The drawing had the status of a contract in such cases. The exhibition also illustrates the role of drawing in the production process. An exceptional example in this regard is provided by the drawings from Luigi and Guiseppe Valadier's workshop in 18th-century Rome. These goldsmiths carefully preserved the drawings they used, which now offer a unique insight into the role played by drawing in the making process. Drawings obviously had a marketing function too: they were sent all over Europe and taken to trade fairs to sell products.



*Design for a tureen, Luigi Valadier, c. 1760–c. 1770. Rijksmuseum collection*

**With thanks to**

The collection of design drawings was made possible by the Decorative Art Fund/Rijksmuseum Fund and all the private individuals who contributed to its creation. The exhibition came about with the support of the Prince Bernhard Cultural Fund, thanks to the Marten Orges Fund and the Mondrian Fund.

Design Museum Den Bosch looks beyond designs. We show the influence of design on our daily lives and tell the story behind it. We highlight the cultural significance and the role of design in history, now and in the future.

**Design Museum Den Bosch**

De Mortel 4 5211JD Den Bosch

[www.designmuseum.nl](http://www.designmuseum.nl)

[www.designmuseum.nl/pers](http://www.designmuseum.nl/pers)