

## *A new edition of Frits Lugt's 'Les marques de dessins & d'estampes'*

Rhea Sylvia Blok, Curator, Fondation Custodia (Collection Frits Lugt), Paris

In 1921 Frits Lugt (1884-1970) published the first volume of his reference book on collectors' marks, followed in 1956 by the supplement. This publication had immediate success, as is shown by the instantaneous use by curators, collectors, scholars and dealers of the Lugt numbers. The two volumes have become an indispensable manual for research on the provenance of drawings and prints.

The wealth of information given has largely contributed to its success. Although there were some publications on collectors' marks before Lugt – notably that of Louis Fagan from 1883 – it was Lugt who for the first time managed to catalogue numerous collectors' marks (some 5200 in total), as well as provide a survey of historical prints and drawings collections. We learn from the complete title of the volumes that Frits Lugt not only included collectors' marks from private and public collections, but also marks used by dealers, mounters, printers, editors, as well as artists' sales stamps, annotations, paraps and numbers.

Since the publication of the *Supplément* in 1956, many unrecorded marks have been discovered or have been adopted. In response to the desire expressed by many, the Fondation Custodia, which administers the legacy of Frits Lugt, is preparing a new edition. To that end the Fondation Custodia has entered into a partnership with the Département des Arts graphiques of the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Netherlands Institute for Art history (RKD) in The Hague, and with the Centre allemand d'Histoire de l'Art in Paris. In 2003 the Société Frits Lugt pour l'Etude des Marques de Collection (SFL) was founded and in the same year a successful sale took place to support the work on the publication.

Establishing an exhaustive catalogue of marks inevitably requires the support of the international community of drawing and print specialists. Thanks to their help we have been able to assemble no less than 5000 unrecorded marks, which amounts almost to the number of marks already published in the first two volumes! Moreover, we have found that about 40 % of the collectors' marks published in Lugt need corrections or additional information, following new attributions, changes to the names of institutions etc. In my presentation I will illustrate some examples.

The staggering number of marks with which we have to deal, as well as the inherent problems of Lugt's classification system, has led to the decision to make the new edition accessible on line in database form. The flexibility offered by a database is a major advantage over book publication, allowing for instance regular updates. Furthermore, digital photos of marks will be included whenever possible. Not only will it be easier to find a mark, but the database will also allow word search in the accompanying texts. The new edition includes the two volumes already published by Lugt as well as new findings. The launch of the database on the Internet is scheduled for spring 2010. A small publication on paper will coincide with the database's launch, containing a compilation of illustrations of all marks, which can serve as a handy visual index, preceded by a new introduction. In 2010 the Fondation Custodia will reconsider the feasibility of publishing a new edition on paper.

In the meantime, if your institution makes use of a mark on prints and drawings, new or otherwise unrecorded, or if you have information about unrecorded marks that have come to your attention, we would greatly appreciate it if you could send us a digital photograph (preferably with a ruler next to the mark, 300dpi, jpg or tiff format), together with the necessary information about the institution and the collection. Information can be sent to: Fondation Custodia / 121 Rue de Lille / 75007 Paris / France, or by consulting our website: [www.fondationcustodia.fr](http://www.fondationcustodia.fr) .