

	Object:	The Milkmaid
	Museum:	Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de
	Collection:	Kupferstichkabinett
	Inventory number:	Kl. 254 Leyden

Description

In addition to Jacopo de' Barbari, Albrecht Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi, Lucas van Leyden was one of the leading engravers of the Renaissance. One of his best-known works is *The Milkmaid*, with its captivating lines, considered to be one of the first works of the early modern era. It does not feature the likes of a mythological or religious theme, but a scene from everyday life. What the viewer sees has apparently been snatched from life: A farmhand has brought his cows to the barn, a maid prepares for milking. Whereas the cow, placed in the foreground parallel to the picture, dominates the composition, at second glance, we recognize the boy's interest in the maid. She turns her head away shyly, however. As a result, the picture is not merely a genre scene that copies reality, but it bears a moralistic meaning: The rising branch on the tree trunk next to the boy and the hole in the tree trunk behind the maid were interpreted as sexual symbols in their day. Where this relationship between the two protagonists might lead is made clear by the round belly of the cow in the foreground. And precisely above this, the second cow fixes her gaze upon the viewer—a moralizing pointing of the finger by Lucas. Like Dürer, Lucas signed his works with a plate containing a monogram and the year, such as may be seen here in the front center.

Basic data

Material/Technique:	Copperplate engraving
Measurements:	114.0 x 156.0 mm

Events

Printed	When	1510
	Who	Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533)
	Where	

Keywords

- Alltagsszene
- Graphics
- Monogram
- Sexuelle Symbolik