

## ***Le cabinet de curiosités* of Félicien Rops** **Whim and fantasy in the margin of prints**

**Exhibition presented at the Félicien Rops Provincial Museum,  
on the occasion of the inauguration of the renovated museum  
From 22 November 2003 to 29 February 2004**

Opening its doors once again after a long period of works, the Félicien Rops Provincial Museum, now completely renovated and enlarged, just had to devote the first of its temporary exhibitions to its artist.

*Le cabinet de curiosités de Félicien Rops* presents a particularly original facet of the etcher's work, namely the composition of etchings containing original drawings or handwritten texts in their margins. The workmanship of these drawings and the number of works created (over two hundred listed works) entitle us to see the peculiarity of Rops' creative work and to talk about an exceptional practice in 19<sup>th</sup>-century etching, as Hélène Védrine, author of the catalogue, declares.

The *marginalia* do not appear haphazardly. These are not drawings sketched from life or hastily scribbled rough notes, but a real cabinet of curiosities organising quite singular collections. The margin space is the privileged area for experimenting plastic and verbal variations free from any constraints and standards.

True to character, Rops' privileged themes were eroticism, the sexual object, licentiousness and, as a connecting piece, the macabre. Faces, images and curiosities gleaned from journeys were added, which sometimes formed the presentation of new works.

The works presented come from many Belgian and foreign private collections, art galleries, the Print Room of the Royal Library of Brussels, etc.

The text of the catalogue is signed by Mrs Hélène Védrine, lecturer at the University of Mulhouse and author of a doctorate thesis published under the title *De l'encre à l'acide*<sup>1</sup>. The catalogue is published by the firm *Editions Somogy*, Paris (160 pages – 80 illustrations) and will be sold at the museum at the price of 30 euros.

The exhibition is organised with the assistance of the Wallonia-Brussels French-speaking Community, the Smap Insurance Company, the National Lottery and the non-profit organisation "Les Amis du Musée Rops"<sup>2</sup>.

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Open Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed 24, 25 and 31 Dec. 2003 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> From ink to acid (etching)

<sup>2</sup> Friends of the Rops Museum