

# Hendrik Nicolaas Werkman: Hot Printing



Item 1

## **BLACKWELL'S RARE BOOKS**

48-51 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BQ, UK

Tel.: +44 (0)1865 333555 Fax: +44 (0)1865 794143

Email: [rarebooks@blackwell.co.uk](mailto:rarebooks@blackwell.co.uk) Twitter: [@blackwellrare](https://twitter.com/blackwellrare)

[blackwell.co.uk/rarebooks](http://blackwell.co.uk/rarebooks)

## INTRODUCTION

The attitude with which Hendrik Nicolass Werkman (1882-1945) reacted to the significant setbacks in his life, not least, the withdrawal of funds from his successful commercial printing company, which left him in an attic with one employee and one handpress, but engendered, in his words, 'a liberation of the spirit and a burst of creativity', and his country's occupation by the Nazis in 1930, is clearly reflected in his highly inventive, playful, printed images.

Werkman was rarely able to leave his native Groningen, but through exchanging issues of his own 1920's publication, 'The Call', contemporary poetry in a typographically inventive style, with fellow European avant-garde publishers' works, he was aware of contemporary artistic movements, including the Bauhaus and Kurt Schwitters' work, particularly his Merz collages.

Employing his simple handpress, Werkman developed innovative printing techniques, often using stencils, rolling the ink directly on the paper, re-printing a single sheet multiple times sometimes without re-inking the block, varying ink thicknesses and press pressures, to create his 'druksels', or repeated impressions.

In response to the invasion of his country in May, 1949, he founded, with three friends, the clandestine publishing house, De Blauwe Schuit (The Blue Barge), which issued a total of around 40 works, in editions ranging from 40 to 150, privately distributed to friends. The published material, which included poetry, biblical and Jewish texts, was chosen to encourage the spirit of an occupied people, and often refers to freedom of thought and expression. Werkman was not a member of the Chamber of Culture (officially sanctioned by the occupiers), and not permitted to publish, yet, he printed his name on the colophon of these publications. He was shot by the Gestapo three days before the liberation of Groningen.

(Simoni A., 'Hendrik Nicolaas Werkman and the Werkmaniana in the the British Library' (British Library Journal 2, 1976); Boyer, Kent L. 'Cultural Activism: The Final Legacy of H.N. Wekman'; Purvis, A. 'HN Werkman', 2004)

**1. Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and Jehuda Halevi. Sabbatsgesänge.** [Groningen]: *Die Blauwe Schuit, 1941, ONE OF 60 COPIES, title on title-page with cross-hatched shading, colophon with De Blauwe Schuit woodcut vignette, half-width bifolium repeating vignette at end, pp. [8], [4, half-width], folio, original brown paper wrappers, sewn, cover with rolled layers of blue, with stencils of silhouetted figures of varying intensities of blue, rear cover with illuminated menorah printed in yellow and red, near fine [with:] Order Form with 4-line verse by Jacob van Oostvoorne and blue De Blauwe Schuit vignette on front cover, price and details of the group's administrator, Anna Jensen on rear cover*  
**£4000**

'This collection, Sabbatsgesänge, a choice of old Jewish sabat songs was printed for Jews and Christians on behalf of Die Blauwe Schuit in the light of Easter 1941 by H.N.

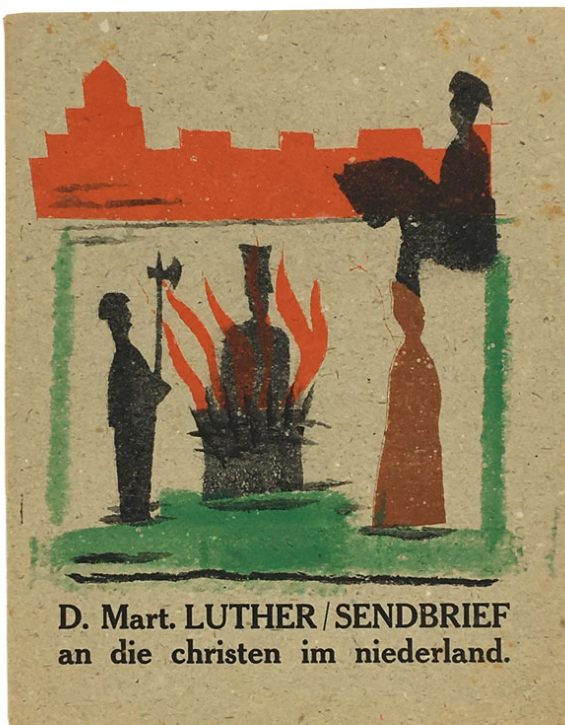
Werkman, who also made the drawings of the cover himself with the printer's roll. The edition is limited to 60 copies, which are not for sale and are distributed among the friends of Die Blauwe Schuit.' [Dutch, colophon].

The text selected and annotated by FRA Henkels, with poems by Jehuda Halevi, translated by Franz Rosenzweig; the 'Sabbatspalm' (ps 92) was translated by Martin Buber and the Jewish songs by Ludwig Strausz.

Werkman's technique of using the same stencil without re-inking for each printed iteration, known as 'shadowing' is particularly evident here. "I use an old hand press so... the impression can be regulated instinctively. Sometimes you have to press hard, sometimes very lightly.." (Purvis, A. 'HN Werkman', 2004)

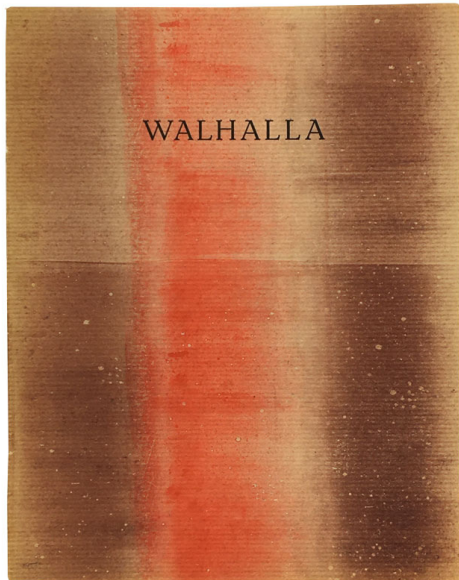
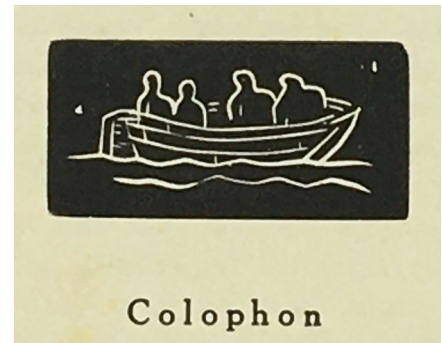
2. **Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and Charles Péguy. Prière pour nous autres charnels.** [Groningen]: Die Blauwe Schuit, May, 1941, ONE OF 90 COPIES, title with ex libris H L stamp at upper edge, colophon with stylised DBS typographic vignette, pp. [4], small 4to, original card wrappers, sewn, cover with poem's first words lightly printed in blue, with over-printed abstract shapes in red, orange, green and blue with varying intensities, faint mark on rear cover, very good  
£725

'A poem by Lieutenant Charles Péguy fallen during the Marne on the road between the villages of Villeroy and Monthuron, September 5, 1914.' [Dutch, colophon]



3. **Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and Martin Luther. Sendbrief an die Christen im niederland.** [Groningen]: Die Blauwe Schuit, 1941, ONE OF 90 COPIES, title with ex libris H L stamp at upper edge, colophon with De Blauwe Schuit woodcut vignette, pp. [4], small 4to, original textured brown paper wrappers, sewn, cover with stylised figures, one armed, one on horseback, surrounding flaming brazier with city silhouette in background, printed in black, brown, orange and green, very good  
£725

'Luther's Sendbrief an die Christen im Nederland was first printed by Hans Lufft at Wittenberg in the year 1523. And now reprinted for Die Blauwe Schuit in May 1941 by H.N. Werkman. The edition is limited to 90 copies, which will be distributed among the friends of Die Blauwe Schuit at Pentecost.' [Dutch, colophon]



**4. Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and Hendrik de Vries. *Walhalla*. [Groningen]: Die Blauwe Schuit, 1942, ONE OF 75 COPIES, title vignette reproduced from drawing by the author 'and must be regarded on its own, without any connection to the text' [Dutch, colophon], light scattered spotting, pp. [4], small 4to, original brown paper wrappers, sewn, cover with striking blurred banded design in orange and brown, title printed in black, good**  
**£675**

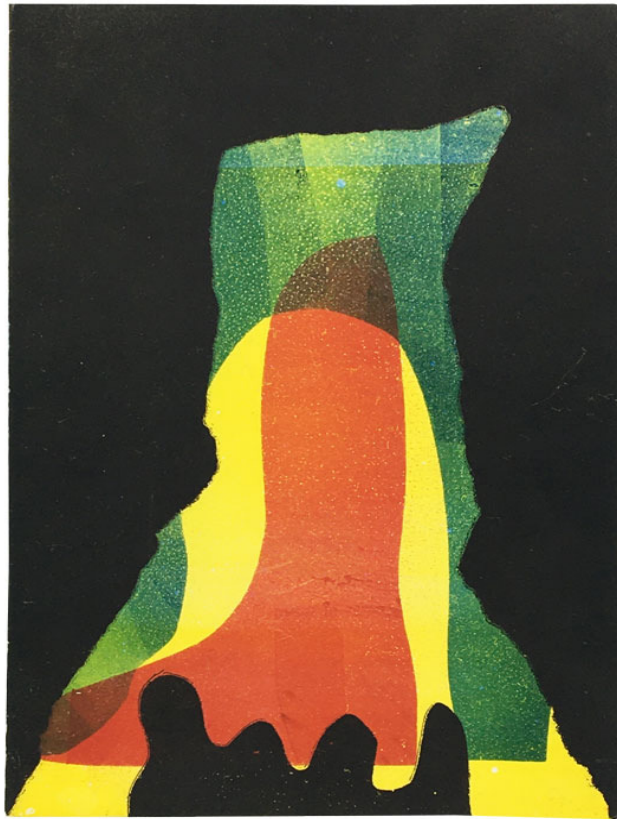
'This poem was written by Hendrik de Vries in the year 1941 for a collection that, however, remained unpublished. It was printed

exclusively for the friends of De Blauwe Schuit in the summer of 1942 at the printing company of H N Werman, who also did the typography. The vignette on the front page is a full-size reproduction of a drawing made by the author and must be seen on its own, without any direct connection to the text. The edition is limited to 75 copies, which will not be sold.' [Dutch, colophon]



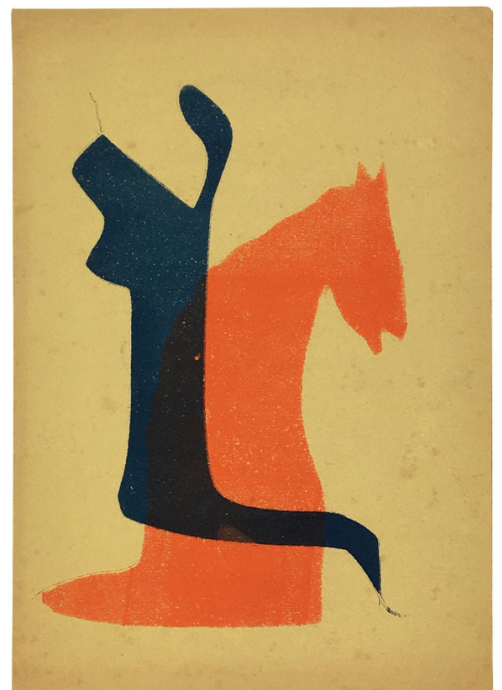
**5. Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and Die Blauwe Schuit friend. *De Grot*. [Groningen]: Die Blauwe Schuit, 1943, ONE OF 75 COPIES (but 40 destroyed in fire, so 1/35), bifolium, tall 8vo, original self wrappers, cover with dramatic abstract image over-printed with varying intensities of green, red and yellow framed in black, rear cover, very faintly spotted, with Die Blauwe Schuit colophon woodcut vignette, very good**  
**£2750**

‘This poem was made for the friends of Die Blauwe Schuit by one of them and printed in full... by H.N. Werkman in November 1943.’ [Dutch, colophon].  
It is interesting to note the anonymity of the writer, as opposed to the printer.



**6. Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and Louis Bouilhet. Soldat libre. [Groningen]: Die Blauwe Schuit, 1943, ONE OF 75 COPIES, ex libris H L stamp at head of fold, bifolium, tall 8vo, original self wrappers, cover with stylised design of rider in blue, superimposed on horse in orange, colophon with De Blauwe Schuit woodcut vignette, a few faint marks on cover, very good**  
**£725**

‘Soldat libre, by Louis Bouilhet, was printed and illuminated by H.N Werkman in an edition of 75 copies, which were distributed by Easter 1943 among the friends of Die Blauwe Schuit who could not celebrate this high celebration at home.’  
[French, colophon]





7. **Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and P.C. Boutens.** *Reizang van burgers, terugkeerend uit de ballingschap.* [Groningen]: *Die Blauwe Schuit*, 1944, ONE OF 90 COPIES, bifolium, tall 8vo, original self wrappers, cover with abstract design printed in blue, green and orange, colophon with *De Blauwe Schuit* woodcut vignette, faint toned band at edge of cover, rear cover with ex libris H L stamp partially erased, very good  
£725

‘This poem by P. C. Boutens from his Middelburg's Transition was printed by H.N. Werkman in an edition of 90 copies in the year 1944 to be distributed among the various members of Die Blauwe Schuit.’ [Dutch, colophon]

8. [Werkman (Hendrik Nicolaas, printer) and Willem Hendrik Nagel]. *Terzinen van de Mei.* [Utrecht: *De Bezige Bij*, 1944], ONE OF 200 COPIES, verses printed in red, bifolium, small folio, original self wrappers, cover with stencilled abstract design printed in green, brown, red, blue, white and pink, rear cover with small bee device in red, very good  
£625

An extraordinarily vibrant image, given the circumstances in which it was created. Werkman's final publication before his death in 1945: "Voor mijn vrouw" (for my wife).

