

HUMAN LICE IN FIGURATIVE ART AND HISTORY

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The earliest known drawings of lice are from wood-cuts in the first edition of *Hortus sanitatis* in 1491. In 1665, Robert Hook using the first microscopes described in *Micrographia*, the distinct morphology of the head louse.

Twenty-four paintings, which had delousing as their main subject were found in different museums and collections. Twenty of them were produced during the 17th Century and were painted by Flemish and Dutch masters such as Brekelenkam, Brouwer, Craesbeck, Dou, Hals, Hooch and Molenver. The Spanish artist Murillo and the French artist Tassel also produced paintings depicting children being deloused.

Several wood-cuts on this subject were produced between the 16th and 19th Century by artists such as Basse, De Jonghe, de Wael, Matheus, Sancton, Hoeg and Davison. Langlais and Saint-Germain made wood-cuts of monkeys delousing people.

Pictures or drawings of people delousing themselves or others can be found on a large number of postcards from the 20th Century, especially during WWI and WWII.