

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM
FINE ARTS

JOHAN CHRISTIAN DAHL

Bergen 1788 - Dresden 1857

Norwegian school

KRONBORG CASTLE BY MOONLIGHT, 1836

Oil on canvas

H. 0,305 m ; W. 0,451 m

Signed and dated lower right

DATE: 1836

SOURCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by Mr. Siebreit (sold anonymously at auction, Blomqvist, November 1926, lot 98)

Hanni Olsen collection, Oslo, acquired in 1937

Private collection, Norway

LITERATURE:

J. H. Langaard, *J. C. Dahk's Verk*, Oslo, 1937, no. 456.

F. Weilbach, *Kunstnerleksikon*, vol. I, Copenhagen, 1947, p. 233.

Marie Lødup Bang, *Johan Christian Dahl: Life and Works*, Oslo, 1987, vol. II, p. 251, no. 799; vol. III, pl. 399 (illustrated).

Johan Christian Dahl had already completed his training as a landscape painter when he left his native Norway for Copenhagen in 1811 to enter the Copenhagen Academy of Fine Arts. A pupil of C. A. Lorentzen, his main interests lay in seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting and in the study of Eckersberg's views of Rome. In 1818, he set out on a Grand Tour. When he stopped over in Dresden, he moved in artistic circles and met the celebrated German painter Caspar David Friedrich. In the summer of 1820 he travelled to Rome and Naples, returning in 1821 to settle permanently in Dresden. From 1823 onwards he lived in the same house as C.D. Friedrich. He was one of three outstanding Dresden painters of the period – the others being C.D. Friedrich and Carl Gustav Carus. The three exerted a decisive influence on German Romantic painting.

Dahl became especially well known for landscapes with striking visual characteristics and an interesting, enveloping atmosphere. Cities and scenes bathed in moonlight – a subject of symbolic interest for many Northern Romantic painters – were of particular interest to Dahl, who was equally fascinated by the technical challenges of representing different elements seen and unified by the moon's light. The motif of Copenhagen's Kronborg castle seen by moonlight was perhaps Dahl's favourite subject. The present painting, dated 1836, is the second of seven known versions, and appears to be the first that was painted from sketches. The earliest known

Andlauer Hof, Münsterplatz 17, 4051 Basel, Switzerland

Phone +41 61 681 35 35 - Mobile +41 78 955 77 77

Fax +41 61 681 75 70 - jean.f.heim@galerieheim.ch - www.galerieheim.ch

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM FINE ARTS

sketches of the subject date from June 1834, when Dahl stopped in Copenhagen on his way to Norway.

The catalogue raisonné of Dahl's work by M. L. Bang lists seven versions of a finished painting titled *Kronberg Castle by Moonlight* (op. cit. vol. II and III, nos. 717, 799, 800, 830, 831, 938, 1102). The first, dated 1833 (Bang 717), is the only version with a large two-master in the foreground; all the others, including the present work, replace the two-master with a cutter. In addition, there are no known studies of the subject prior to June 1834. Bang believes that the 1833 painting may have been inspired by an engraving by Eckersberg. The present painting also places greater emphasis on the large boat and on the castle itself. The best known version of Kronborg Castle, probably dated 1849 (Bang 1102), is in the National Museum in Norway.