

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



SVEND HAMMERSHØI
1873 - Copenhagen - 1948

*View of the Christiansborg Palace Chapel and the St. Nicholas Tower
(Slotskirken og Nicolaj Spir set fra Højesteret)*

Oil on canvas; 1947.
75.0 x 60.0 cm

PROVENANCE: Private collection, Denmark

LITERATURE: Tove Jørgensen, *Svend Hammershøi 1873 - 1948 Maler og formgiver*, Museet på Koldinghus, 1990 (19.-25.okt.1947 Slotskirken og Nikolaj Spir set fra Højesteret (M)), p. 108.

Svend Hammershøi enrolled in the painting class at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 1890. From the age of fourteen, he developed increasing interest in ceramics. In 1888, he began to decorate porcelain at the Kjøbenhavns Lervarefabrik in Valby, where he worked with the architect and ceramicist Thorvald Bindesbøll (1846-1908) from 1890 to 1905. After the death of Bindesbøll Hammershøi abandoned ceramics to focus instead on painting. He concentrated on landscapes, initially making sketches and watercolours, and went on to work in oils. He became particularly attracted to ancient and architectural motifs.

The original building of the Christiansborg Palace Chapel [Figs.1, 2] was constructed in the early thirteenth century and was one of Copenhagen's oldest church, the St Nicolas Church. In 1795, a fire broke out in Copenhagen that raged for three days. City buildings stood close, and the fire spread rapidly and ended up by devouring a quarter of all the buildings in the city. When the fire reached St Nicholas Church the spire came down for the second time in the history of the church, and the fire left the church as a ruin. The spire pierced the ground next to the nave, and it was not found until a century later during an excavation at the Nicholas Square. The state was in no financial position to rebuild the church, and the congregation was formally dissolved in 1805 and distributed among other Copenhagen churches. But the church ruin and the churchyard were torn down and removed, leaving only the tower standing.

Christiansborg Palace Chapel was rebuilt as an addition to Christiansborg Castle, where the Danish government sits, on the small island of Slotsholmen. The church towers from a corner of Slotsholmen as a massive temple; it was built in 1826 by the greatest Danish architect of the time, C.F. Hansen (1756-1845), in Neo-Classical style. Hansen was clearly inspired by the ancient Greek and Roman styles, to a large extent from the Roman Panteon.

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Fig.1: Nikolaj Kunsthall, former St. Nicholas Church, Copenhagen



Fig.2: Christiansborg Palace Chapel (interior), Copenhagen
Unidentified photographer