

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



CHRISTEN SCHIELLERUP KOEBKE

1810 – Copenhagen – 1848

Portrait of a Young Sailor with Folded Arms

Pencil on white paper; 18337.

175 x 140 mm

PROVENANCE: Jokum Smith (1920 Copenhagen 1980)¹ – Son of Jokum Smith's mother by descent – Private collection, Sweden

Christen Købke is generally regarded as the most important painter of Denmark's Golden Age and certainly the one who enjoys the widest international recognition. He began his studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and in 1825 became a pupil of Christian August Lorentzen. After the latter's death, Købke was mostly influenced by Christopher Wilhelm Eckersberg and continued as his pupil until 1833. After 1834, a pronounced change took place in his art. Whereas he had previously painted unassuming, simple small pictures, he now began to paint larger, more monumental works. Under the influence of Hermann Ernst Freund, the sculptor, and the German Romantic artist Caspar David Friedrich, he began to develop more ambitious compositions, often prepared with painted or drawn studies having a distinctly romantic mood.

In the autumn of 1837 Købke together with his friend the sculptor Hermann Ernst Freund, travelled to the island Bornholm in Denmark². On this trip he executed several sketches as the present one. The crossing itself apparently made an impression on him, since he observed and sketched both sailors, fellow passengers and the surrounding sea [Fig.1]. Our *Portrait of a Young Sailor* has been executed in the artist's concept showing his models very often half-length the arms folded. A drawing showing his fellow artist Constantin Hansen (1804 – 1880) executed in 1834 [Fig.2] is comparable³. We also know *Portrait of Henrik Clausen at Age Eleven* [Fig.3]⁴ as well as several painted portraits in this understanding.

Købke's visit to Bornholm was quite brief, and there are no known paintings related to this trip.

Due to the artist's short life his drawings are extremely rare.

The attribution has kindly been confirmed by Thomas Lederballe from the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

¹ Jokum Smith worked for publishing industry. In 1952 he was hired by Knud W. Jensen as a director of Danish publisher Gyndendal after Jensen purchased the firm (see, https://biografiskeleksikon.lex.dk/Jokum_Smith).

² Hans Edvard Noerregard – Nielsen, *Christen Købke – Dosseringen og Frederiksborg*, 2, Copenhagen 1996, pp. 167 ff.

³ Private collection. Pencil, 254 x 197 mm. See, Hans Noerregard-Nielsen and Kasper Monrad, in exhib. cat., *Christen Købke 1810 – 1848*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 1996, ill. 141, p. 218.

⁴ Hans edvard Noerregard-Nielsen, *The Golden Age of Danish Art – Drawings from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts*, Copenhagen, Frick Collection, New York, printed in Alexandria, Virginia 1995, no.38, pp.176-7.



Fig.1: *Studies of Sailors*, 1837,
pencil on paper, 208 x 266 mm.
Den kongelige Kobberstiksamling, Copenhagen



Fig.2: *Constantin Hansen*, 1834,
pencil on paper, 197 x 254 mm
Private collection



Fig.3: *Portrait of Henrik Clausen at Age Eleven, 1836,*
pencil and brownish wash on paper, 192 x 134 mm.
Den kongelige Kobberstiksamling, Copenhagen