

LE CLAIRE KUNST SEIT 1982

CHRISTOFFER WILHELM ECKERSBERG

Blåkrog 1783 - 1853 Copenhagen

Relais, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris

Pen and black ink, sepia and grey-blue wash on white paper; 1812.

A sketch in pencil on the verso, inscribed on the verso: *No. 223.*

218 x 292 mm

PROVENANCE: Eckersberg's estate sale, Copenhagen 1854, no. 223 – Theatre director C. C. S. Danneskjold-Samsøes (his sale, Winkel & Magnusson, Copenhagen, November 1916, no. 77) – Holger Hirschsprung, Copenhagen – Danish private collection

EXHIBITION: City hall exhibition (Rådhusudstillingen), Copenhagen 1901, no. 431

Eckersberg arrived in Paris in October 1810. In the following year he entered the studio of Jacques-Louis David. At David's insistence pupils were to carry a sketchbook constantly. This gave them the freedom to capture any subject that met their eye. David did not place emphasis on an especially picturesque choice of motif but encouraged his pupils to select their subject according to his maxim: *voir beau et juste.*

On 15 September 1812 Eckersberg records in his diary a tour of the Champs-Élysées.¹ The present drawing was probably executed on this tour. The sheet is one of a group of several Parisian views such as *The Restaurant Ledoyen at Place de la Concorde near Champs-Élysées* and a *View from the Artist's Room at Hotel d'Irlande, 3 rue de Beaune.*² The present view is probably the most sensitive one. Three related paintings dating from this period display the same playful charm and delicacy that is conveyed by the present drawing. They are *View near the Château of Meudon*, *Figures by the Aqueduc de la Vanne*, Arcueil [fig. 1] and *View of the Pont Royal from the Quai Voltaire, Paris.*³

Eckersberg's stay in Paris in 1810-13 was to have a decisive influence on his artistic development. During his stay he deepened his research into perspective. These ideas were later to dominate his drawings and paintings. In 1818 he was appointed Professor at the Academy in Copenhagen. He radically changed the traditional system of education, strongly emphasizing study from life. Later, the theory of perspective became one of the pivots of his teaching.⁴

It is thought that the subject of the verso [fig. 2] of the present drawing may relate to the life of Odysseus. Eckersberg's profound interest in the saga of Odysseus' life was undoubtedly inspired by his

¹ Villads Villadsen, *C. W. Eckersbergs dagbøger*, I, 1810-1837, Copenhagen 2009, p.70.

² August 1812. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen. See exhib. cat., *Tegninger af C. W. Eckersberg*, Copenhagen 1983, p.162, nos. 44 and 47.

³ *Udsigt fra Meudon Slot*, 1813. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen [inv. no. KMS1623]; *Spadserende ved Aqueduc de la Vanne*, 1813, private collection; *Udsigt ved Pont Royal fr Quai Voltaire i Paris*, 1812, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, [inv. no. EH119]. See Peter Michael Hornung and Kaspar Monrad, *C. W. Eckersberg – dansk malerkunsts fader*, 2005, pp.106, 109, and 111.

⁴ In 1841 Eckersberg published a textbook titled *Linearperspektiven, anvendt paa Malerkunsten [...]*, C.A. Reitzel, Copenhagen.

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time as a student of David. In 1812, Eckersberg participated in a competition at the Palais des Beaux-Art in Paris. The theme was *Ulysse et Télémaque massacrant les prétendants de Pénélope*.⁵ Eckersberg executed several paintings depicting scenes from the life of Odysseus.⁶



Fig. 1: *Figures by the Aqueduc de la Vanne, Arcueil, 1812*, oil on canvas, 32,5 x 40 cm. Private collection



Fig. 2: Present sheet, verso: *Scene from the Life of Odysseus*, pencil

⁵ See Villads Villadsen, *C. W. Eckersbergs dagbøger*, op. cit., pp.62 and 67.

⁶ Den Hirschsprungske Samling, Copenhagen; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton; and the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (see Peter Michael Hornung and Kaspar Monrad, op. cit., pp.94-95).