

KUNSTHAUS ZÜRICH

Johan Christian Dahl, artist (*24.2.1788 Bergen, +14.10.1857 Dresden)



Title	Ansicht Bergens, gesehen von der nördlichen Einfahrt
Also known as	Bergen Seen from the Northern Inlet
Date	1834
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions	image: 27 x 37 cm
Signature	inscr. b. r.: JDahl d.11 Sept. 1834.
Inscription	-
Catalogue raisonné	Bang 1987 II.241.762
Edition / number	-
Edition	-
Inv. No.	ZKG.2018/0014
Credit line	Kunsthau Zürich, Donated by Christen Sveaas, 2018
Accession year	2018

Object type	painting
Classification	C 1[3] painting 19th century Europe

Description

Since this year [editor's note: 2018], the Kunsthau Zürich has been in possession of an important group of works by the Norwegian Romantic painter Johan Christian Dahl (1788 - 1857). A total of 19 paintings by Dahl, as well as one work each by his students Thomas Fearnley and Peder Balke, are included in the generous donation by the Oslo entrepreneur, art collector and patron Christen Sveaas, who has felt close to Switzerland since his studies in St. Gallen and whose gift to the Kunsthau is testimony to this personal affection.

Dahl lived in the same house in Dresden as his artist friend Caspar David Friedrich and, together with the latter, is one of the most internationally renowned Romantic painters.[1] In the Kunsthau's works, Dahl once again proves himself to be a master of the small format. It is the intimate medium of the oil study that allowed him the lightness in the application of paint. Through the suggestive effect of quickly thrown brushstrokes, even pictures in the extremely small format of 7.3 × 12 cm ('The Oder near Swinemünde in Moonlight', ZKG.2018/0016) are of a stupendous freshness and gripping spontaneity. The group of works in the Kunsthau also reflects the entire range of Dahl's places of activity. Views around Naples (such as 'Mount Vesuvius Seen from Ischia', ZKG.2018 / 0004, or 'View over Quisisana and the Bay of Napels', ZKG.2018/0006) bear witness to the fact that this artist - in contrast to the notorious Italy-refuser Friedrich - received essential artistic inspiration in the south. Views of Dresden and its surroundings, in turn,

place him in the circle of the Dresden Romantics. He was not only a member of the Dresden Academy, but also a professor from 1824. Finally, the view of Bergen that is of closer interest here refers to his country of origin, which he visited again for the first time in 1826 after a long absence.

Our picture was taken shortly before his return journey to Dresden on 15 September 1834 and probably directly in front of nature. The view of the northern entrance to Bergen harbour is dominated by the high rock in the background, which rises in majestic dignity above the town. The relatively low horizon line allows the sky to come into full effect, with the clouds in their fleetingness virtuously captured by a few summary, pointedly placed dabs with the brush.

Overall, the work radiates a remarkable calm and in this respect contrasts with Dahl's large, dramatic views of Norway, which are entirely in the tradition of Dutch landscape painting. The experience Dahl had in Italy with the technique of oil sketching seems to have been applied experimentally to the Nordic landscape in this small, painterly exquisite work.[2] Even today's viewer is struck by the freshness of the artistic approach that speaks from this view of Bergen, Dahl's birthplace.[3]

Provenance

Johan Christian Dahl (*1788 Bergen, +1857 Dresden) (Künstler/-in)
J. R. Bull, Bergen
Dr. Edvard Bull, Kristiania
Ida Bull
Haakon Mehren (*1938)
o.D. – 2018, Christen Sveaas (*1956 Oslo) (Sammler/-in)
ab 2018, Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft | Kunsthaus Zürich (Museum), Zürich, Geschenk

Provenance category

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About the provenance

Literature

- Marie Lødrup Bang: Johan Christian Dahl 1788-1857. Life and works, Catalogue raisonné of J. C. Dahl's oil paintings 2, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1990, No. 762, S. 241.
- Johan Christian Dahl, hrsg. von Nina Sørli, Ausst.-Kat. Kistefos Museet, Jevnaker, Oslo: Labyrinth Press, 2000, No. 21, S. 94.
- Jonay Beyer: «Johan Christian Dahl. Ansicht Bergens, gesehen von der nördlichen Einfahrt, 1834», in: Jahresbericht 2018, hrsg. von Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, Zürich, 2019, S. 14-17.