

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



CHRISTOFFER WILHELM ECKERSBERG

1783 Blåkrug - Copenhagen 1853

A crossing War Corvette while turning (En krydsende Krigs-corvet I Vending), 1832

Pen and black ink with grey wash on paper mounted by the artist on another sheet of paper. Monogrammed and inscribed by the artist in pen and brown ink: *E. - En krydsende Krigs-corvet I Vending, dens Fokkermast er fjernet 200 Alen. Skibets Diametralplan afviger 50 Gr fra Billedets Paralel. Hoveddistancen 20 Tommer.* [A crossing war corvette while turning. Its foremast is removed 400 feet. The ship's middle-line plane deviates 50 degrees from the picture's parallel. The principle distance is 20 inches]. Inscribed (recto) 1832 [a possible date] and numbered N 22 (recto); numbered N16 (verso) by a different hand. 245 x 310 mm

PROVENANCE: The artist's estate sale; there described "a Corvette. Indian ink; very elaborate", Copenhagen, January 1854, lot 249 – Private Collection, Denmark

Eckersberg studied at the Copenhagen Academy from 1803 to 1809 as a student of Abildgaard. During his travels abroad in 1810-16, he did not follow the latter's example by going to Rome directly, but instead went to Paris, where he studied in the studio of Jacques-Louis David. This stay was vital to his development as an artist. However, it was in Rome, where he lived from 1813-16, that his work reached maturity. Here, landscapes and views came to play as prominent a part in his art as history painting. After his return to Copenhagen he was appointed professor at the Academy in 1818. He radically changed the system of education by emphasizing studies from life. During the ensuing years the theory of perspective became one of the pivots of his teaching. It was Eckersberg who conclusively rejected the idealizing doctrines of the 18th century and who introduced a form of realism based on the study of nature, while employing neoclassical compositional principles. This approach was adopted by several of his students. Through his influence as an academy professor, he fundamentally shaped the development of Danish art¹.

Marine painting and drawing were central to Eckersberg's art in the years after 1821, becoming his main interest in the 1830s and '40s. According to Emil Hannover, the artist's enthusiasm for the art of navigation combined with his passionate interest in perspective and mechanics led him to embrace marine subjects². Surprisingly, he paid little attention to Dutch marine painting of the 17th century. His source of inspiration can be found in popular prints. He followed a tradition widespread in Europe throughout the 18th century - the highly accurate depiction of the rigging and masts of ships, as seen in the present drawing.

¹ Kasper Monrad, in: exh. cat., *Danish Painting - The Golden Age*, London 1984, p. 91.

² Emil Hannover, *Maleren C. W. Eckersberg, en studie i dansk kunsthistorie*, Copenhagen 1898, p. 122.

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST

In the present “marine portrait” Eckersberg employed a brush and various strengths of gray wash, deftly using the reserve of the paper to depict the sails and the undulating surface of the water with great perfection. Similar drawings dated 1830 and 1832 depicting vessels are in Copenhagen³ and in New York.⁴

³ Statens Museum for Kunst. Tegninger af C. W. Eckersberg, exh. cat., Copenhagen 1983, p. 185, no. 123 repr. - Peter Michael Hornung and Casper Monrad, *C. W. Eckersberg – dansk malerkunsts fader*, Copenhagen 2005, p. 342, repr.

⁴ *The Thaw Collection – Master Drawings and Oil Sketches – Acquisitions Since 1994*, exh. cat., The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York 2002-3, pp. 62-3, no. 28 repr.