DFRIEDRICH

where it all started

CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH

where it all started

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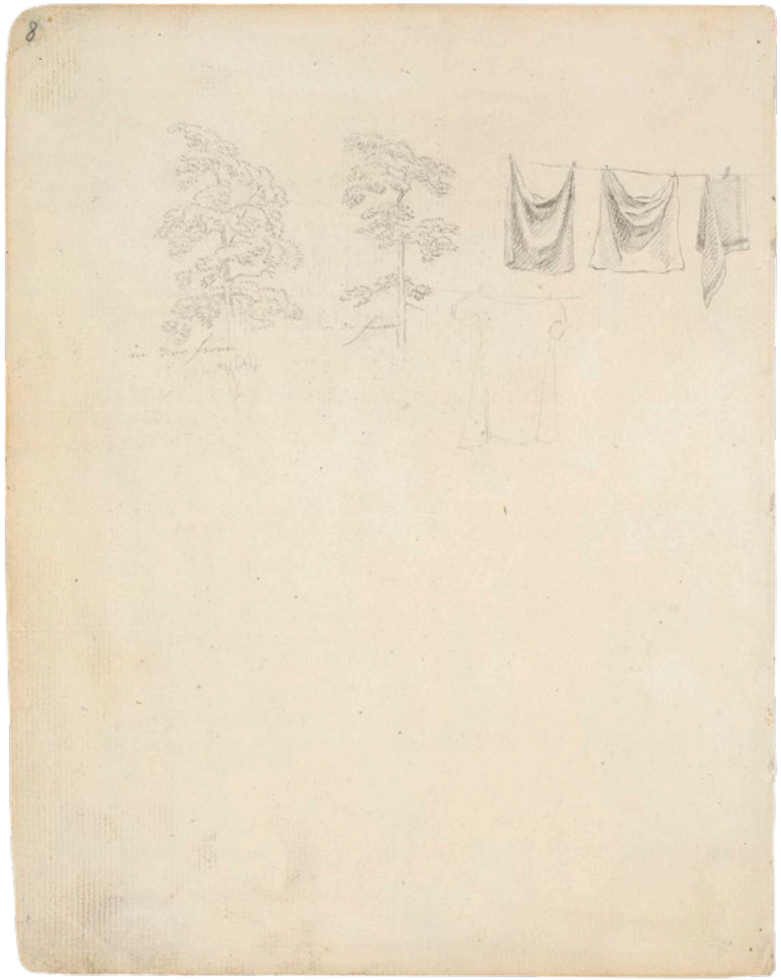
Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick | Johanna Ziegler

OBSERVATIONS ON FRIEDRICH'S NATURE STUDIES AND PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS

"Furnished with pencil and paper / not forgetting the rubber", we read in two lines of a longer "verse letter" written in circa 1802/1803, which describes Friedrich setting forth to sketch from nature.[1] This minimal inventory of equipment seems to have sufficed for most of his forays.[2] As a rule, his sketching paper was contained in a bound notebook.[3] In her catalogue raisonné, Christina Grummt assigns 404 of the altogether 1014 sheets attributed to Caspar David Friedrich to a total of seventeen different sketchbooks.[4] Many of these sheets are double-sided, which indicates that approximately one half of Friedrich's surviving drawings must have come from sketchbooks. Only six of these have survived in a bound state, while all the others have meanwhile been disbound and the sheets dispersed.[5]

The Berlin Sketchbook I – the first sketchbook, produced in 1799 during the Dresden period, and no longer in a bound condition – is preserved at the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin. It contains a pencil drawing of the foliage of two pine trees, their open contours indicated by small strokes and hooks in a style familiar from many later drawings. The trees stand "*in der Ferne*" (in the distance) in relation to the viewer, as Friedrich notates fastidiously alongside each tree trunk (fig. 1). In 1807, we re-encounter the left-hand tree, also on the left and again seen from a distance, at the edge of the painting *View over the Elbe Valley* (fig. 24, p. 143). Alongside trees, a typical study motif, Friedrich occasionally took up his pencil to record objects from everyday life – in this case three towels hanging from a clothesline, and below them, indicated only with fine contour lines, a drying shirt. Its folds are delineated by loose but clearly placed strokes. Surviving from his boat crossing from Copenhagen in the Copenhagen Sketchbook are three sheets dated 5–7 May 1799. Executed for practice, or simply as a diversion, they depict fellow travellers in various poses: standing, lying down or seated. Similar hatching lines are observable here in the rendering of items of clothing (fig. 1). Contained

8 | **Detail**



1 Caspar David Friedrich
Two Tree Studies, Hanging Laundry
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook I
c. 1799 | CAT 15

on one sheet of the Berlin Sketchbook I together with a cloud study are a number of small, cursorily executed figures, consisting only of outlines without any modelling (fig. 3). The Berlin Sketchbook II, which dates from the following year, again documents Friedrich's interest in studies of figures in various poses, which he sketched from Dutch and Flemish paintings in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie for later use as models for accessory figures (figs. 1, 2, p. 191).[6]

With the exception of the Small Manheim Sketchbook,[7] Friedrich's sketchbooks are dominated by studies of vegetation, trees, rock formations and landscapes. On 20 April 1799, he sketched a still-leafless tree standing on a hillside (fig. 4). He provides a few hints concerning the surrounding landscape: a small bridge with wooden handrails, and on the upper right, a tall sapling. Using pencil, Friedrich traces the intricate ramifications of the branches, which hang downward above the slope, down to the smallest detail. As indicated by its sinuous outline, the right hand side of the tree, bare of branches, lies in shadow. Friedrich had proceeded similarly two years earlier – then still in Copenhagen – in a study of a leafed-out oak tree (fig. 5). With foliage outlined in jagged lines and its forceful presence heightened through modelling with coarse hatching lines, it otherwise has little in common with the graceful and almost curvaceous branches of the early sheet in the sketchbook from the Dresden period, although it too, as notated by the artist, was executed "after nature in 1797".

Friedrich reworked his pencil studies from nature – for the most part, presumably, in the studio – with pencil or pen and brush, overdrawing them using carbon black or iron-gall ink, and applying washes consisting of diluted pigment or ink and brown-toned watercolours such as ochre or bistre mixtures. Colour samples are found at the margins of a study of a conifer dated 1798, whose contours were essentially omitted and applied later using a brush over the preliminary pencil drawing. They show how Friedrich blended together the almost sepia-like greyish-brown tone from various colours (fig. 6). Here, too, he has inscribed the notation "from nature". Still perceptible in studies from 1799 from the Berlin Sketchbook I – among them a study of vegetation at the foot of a tree trunk (fig. 7) and a study of a massive, leafy tree near a boulder, executed in pen over pencil without additional internal modelling (fig. 8) – is the influence of contemporary drawing manuals, among them Adrian Zingg's *Anfangsgründe für Landschaftszeichner*, on the "Fundamentals of Landscape Drawing".[8]

The blackening on the reverse of the hitherto unidentified landscape *Stream with a Bridge*, also dating from 1799, indicates that it was conceived as the design for an etching (fig. 9). With its only partial application of wash to the cloudy sky, partly unfinished descriptive linework, and

2 Caspar David Friedrich
Study of Seated Youth
Disbound Copenhagen Sketchbook I
7 May 1798 | CAT 8

3 Caspar David Friedrich
Studies of Figures and Clouds
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook I
c. 1799 | CAT 20

4 Caspar David Friedrich
Tree Studies, Stone Arch Bridge
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook I
20 April 1799 | CAT 14

5 Caspar David Friedrich
Oak Tree
1797 | CAT 3

6 Caspar David Friedrich
Tree Studies
September 1798 | CAT 9

7 Caspar David Friedrich
Study of Plants and Tree Trunk
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook I
c. 1799 | CAT 13

8 Caspar David Friedrich
Tree Study, Study of a Rock (below)
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook I
27 May 1799 | CAT 18

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9 Caspar David Friedrich
Stream with a Bridge
c. 1799 | CAT 32

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10 Caspar David Friedrich
Rock Studies
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook I
20 May 1799 | CAT 17

11 Caspar David Friedrich
Rocky Slope
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook I
9 June 1799 | CAT 19

12 Caspar David Friedrich
Boulders with Plants in Between
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook II
17 August 1799 | CAT 25

13 Caspar David Friedrich
Studies of Stones and Rocks, Study of Rocks with a Flight of Steps
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook II
2 October 1799 | CAT 26

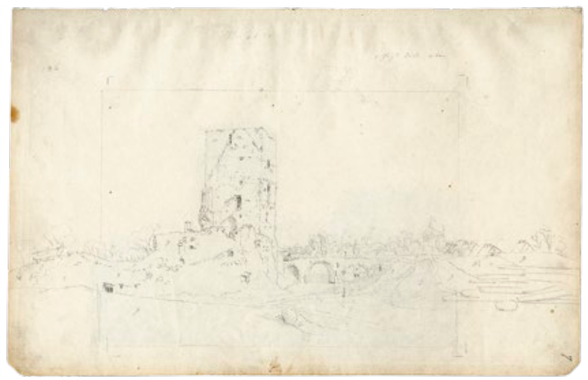
predominant emphasis on contours, this somewhat conventional composition betrays inconsistencies. Quite typical for Friedrich are the rocks set in the water in the foreground, their distinct contours defined using just a few lines. Similar stones are found later in Friedrich's landscapes of the coastline on Rügen (fig. 18). Friedrich proceeds in a very similar fashion in his studies of rock formations in Saxon Switzerland, with powerful contours retraced with pen and the shadowed areas and elements integrated into the landscape using wash (figs. 10–13). He does not, however, pursue the possibilities of typical or picturesque arrangements, as in the above-mentioned sheet *Stream with a Bridge,* instead betraying a pronounced interest in exceptional or particularly striking constellations of motifs. His *Rock Studies* of 20 May 1799 makes an almost surreal impression (fig. 10); the fantastical rock formations recorded in a sketchbook on 17 August 1799 (fig. 12) went on to serve a number of years later as the model for the summit of the mountain in the sepia *Cross in the Mountains* (fig. 50). They appear again in the ensuing version in oil known as the *Tetschen Altarpiece* (fig. 1, p. 239), whose mountain peak is modelled on Honigstein in Saxon Switzerland. Clearly, Friedrich repeatedly took up his studies independently of their date of origin, picking out a variety of motifs he would then incorporate into his invented compositions.

PAPER

Friedrich lived in a time of change – not just socially and politically, but technologically as well. This also applies to the artist's materials available to him. Tried-and-true materials and implements remained in use for decades, while at the same time new methods and technical innovations were put to the test. A decisive factor alongside the delight in experimentation on the part of artists was the availability of certain materials. Today, we are increasingly gaining better insights into such technological transformations by consulting previously little-regarded historical sources, as well as by exploiting advances in scientific sampling and imaging methods.[9] Friedrich explored the potential of new innovations in drawing materials, as well as in technical aids, instructing himself on how best to make use of them through the latest artist manuals and other publications.[10]

For this reason, his oeuvre reflects the dramatic changes taking place in the development of paper and drawing materials at the turn

14 Caspar David Friedrich
Tree Studies (verso)
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook II
7 April 1800 | CAT 28



15 Caspar David Friedrich
Ruin on a Dyke (Powder Tower, Castle Ruins of Wolgast)
Disbound Large Rügen Sketchbook
c. October 1801 | CAT 59

of the 19th century, which can be illustrated, for example, with reference to the paper he used.

Well into the 18th century, the only paper available in Europe was laid or handmade paper, recognisable by its ribbed structure and produced using a sieve formed of metal wires. All of Friedrich's works on paper up until the early Dresden period – including the watercolours produced in Copenhagen in 1797 (figs. 2–4, pp. 35–37) and the drawings in the early Berlin Sketchbook I and II, dated 1799/1800 – were executed on laid paper. The textured surface structure has a profound impact on the optical impression of works executed on laid paper. This is clearly evident, for example, in the tree studies found in the Berlin Sketchbook II (fig. 14). Through the use of laid paper, the drawing acquires its own grid structure, which has a strong effect in close-up viewing. More importantly, the screen structure of the paper shows through the lines of the drawn limbs and branches, shaping the character of the linework itself.

For the generation that preceded Friedrich, these surface characteristics were increasingly perceived as a restriction. The resultant demand for absolutely smooth, fine paper was eventually accommodated by the English papermaker James Whatman, whose innovative wove paper or so-called 'Vélin' (as it was called on the continent, in evocation of vellum) was quickly disseminated throughout Europe beginning in the 1780s.[11] Paper displaying the characteristic Whatman watermark is found on numerous 19th century works, including a large number by Friedrich.[12] Wove first makes its appearance in his oeuvre around 1799. Friedrich required smooth paper in particular for executing portraits, for which he used black chalk with powerful hatching lines and extremely fine modelling for the face.[13] The earliest landscape drawings executed on wove paper referenced by Grummt are *The Regenstein in the Harz (Clifftop with Wooded Summit)* (fig. 7, p. 172) and the drawings of the Large Mannheim Sketchbook of 1799, the earliest sketchbook consisting of wove paper. This sketchbook contains numerous vedute and precisely rendered depictions of architecture from the wider surroundings of Dresden and Saxon Switzerland but also the (no longer surviving) castle ruins of Wolgast near Usedom in formerly Swedish Pomerania (fig. 15).[14] Notated here for the first time (alongside a number of abbreviations referring to a legend) are colour notations and information on the impressive thickness of the walls of the destroyed gunpowder tower ("11 Füß dick oben" – 11 feet thick at the top), and, at the entrance to the bridge in the foreground, notations on the proportions of a human figure, and alongside that, the word "Mann".[15] To facilitate later transfer, to an etching plate, for example, Friedrich has delimited the pictorial field and partially blackened the reverse of the drawing.

In view of the subsequent development of Friedrich's drawing style towards fine lines and accurate rendering, it hardly seems surprising that he switched almost entirely to wove paper around 1800. He exploited the new possibilities of this type of paper, visibly adjusting his working manner in relation to them, to the evident benefit of his artistic intentions. In contrast to his drawing paper, Friedrich seems to have been less exacting in choosing writing paper – clearly, far fewer aesthetic demands were made on the latter. As late as 1830 or thereabouts, letters and other texts were still being written on laid paper, often with watermarks of the kind no longer found in contemporaneous drawings. Examples are the watermarks with the Saxon coat of arms on his *Äusserungen* ("Remarks …"), or the watermark with crossed swords on a letter to Louise Seidler (fig. 1, p. 339).[16] Later on, Friedrich used laid paper only in isolated instances, on occasion for architectural designs, for example.[17]

THE SKETCHBOOKS

Although the switch to wove paper was virtually immediate, Friedrich's technique changed only gradually. As earlier, he generally reworked his

14 | Detail

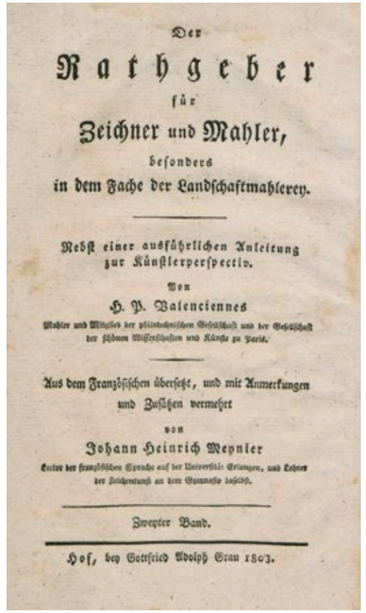
Werner Busch

CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH AND PIERRE-HENRI DE VALENCIENNES

Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, a painter and theorist with a large circle of students, was clearly the most important source of inspiration for Friedrich's approach to capturing the natural world. In this essay, I will take a closer look at the impact of Valenciennes's work on Friedrich.

First published in year VIII of the Revolutionary Calendar (1799/1800), Valenciennes's compendious treatise *Élémens de perspective pratique, à l'usage des artistes* came out in Germany a mere three years later, in a widely circulated two-volume edition with annotations by the translator.[1] Two volumes were deemed necessary because Valenciennes's treatise links two things that do not seem to belong together in any immediately obvious way. The first part, consisting of a good 400 pages, is devoted to perspective, while the second part, 200 pages long, is a practical guide to landscape painting. Art historians have tended to focus almost exclusively on this second part. Understandably so, as it is in this part that Valenciennes extols in some detail and with innovative zeal the purpose and practice of painting oil sketches. A large number of Valenciennes's oil sketches have come down to us, most of them are now in the collection of the Louvre. Looking at them today, we would not hesitate to describe them as autonomous works of art in their own right. For Valenciennes, however, they were no more than studies – in his 'official' landscape paintings, Valenciennes remained committed to the canon of classic academic standards and subjects. His practice of working *sur le motif* and of painting rapidly executed oil sketches that captured the changing atmospheric conditions was widely adopted, eventually reaching Camille Corot and the artists of the Barbizon School through Valenciennes's pupils Jean-Victor Bertin and Achille-Etna Michallon. Valenciennes's theory and practice gave rise to an entire branch of scholarship devoted to oil sketches.[2]

However, this single-minded focus has rather blinkered scholars to Valenciennes's numerous observations on new ways of representing nature in the *first* part of the treatise. In this


Der
Rathgeber
für
Zeichner und Mahler,
besonders
in dem Fache der Landschaftmahlerey.

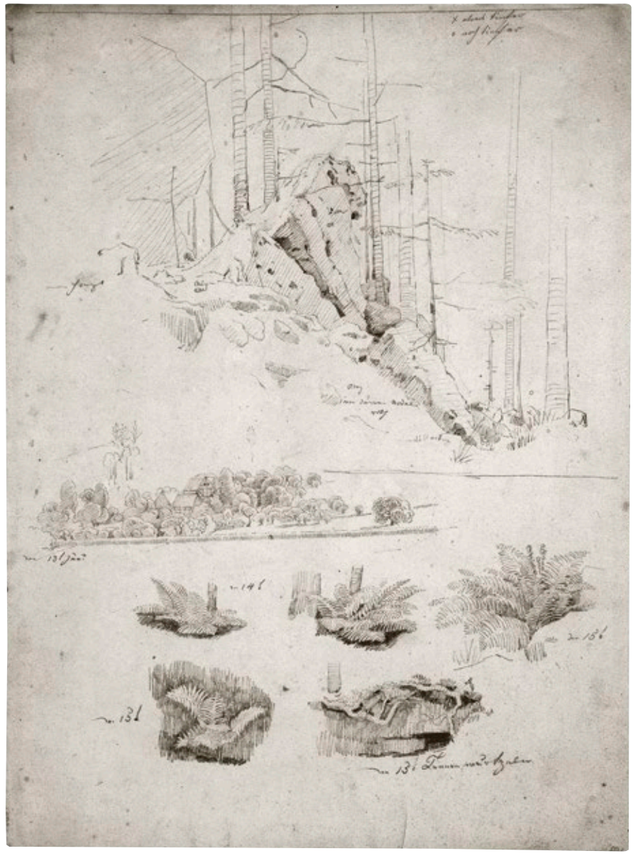
Nebst einer ausführlichen Anleitung
zur Künstlerperspectiv.

Von
H. P. Valenciennes
Mahler und Mitglied der philotechnischen Gesellschaft und der Gesellschaft der schönen Wissenschaften und Künste zu Paris.

Aus dem Französischen übersetzt, und mit Anmerkungen
und Zusätzen vermehrt
von
Johann Heinrich Meynier
Lector der französischen Sprache auf der Universität Erlangen, und Lehrer der Zeichenkunst an dem Gymnasio daselbst.

Zweyter Band.

Hof, bey Gottfried Adolph Grau 1803.



1 Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes
Der Rathgeber für Zeichner und Mahler, besonders in dem Fache der Landschaftmahlerey: Nebst einer ausführlichen Anleitung zur Künstlerperspectiv (German edition of *Élémens de perspective pratique*) | 1803

2 Caspar David Friedrich
Boulders and Trees, Farmstead, Ferns |
13, 14, 15 June (1810)
Pencil on wove paper, 357 × 260 mm
Private collection (G 628)

essay I shall attempt to trace the astonishingly far-reaching influence of *both* parts of the manual on Caspar David Friedrich.[3] This is not to say that Friedrich drew on Valenciennes's treatise to the exclusion of other such texts. Several of the French artist's precepts can also be found elsewhere, but the sheer number of practical parallels suggests that Friedrich favoured Valenciennes's textbook. However, we must bear in mind that Friedrich's command of French may not have been such as to allow him to make the most of the original French version of the treatise of 1799/1800, even though copies of it were available in Dresden. The German edition, published in 1803, would have filled in any gaps (fig. 1).

DRAWING FROM NATURE

Most of Caspar David Friedrich's more than 1000 surviving drawings were intended to serve as direct visual records of nature, as studies for further use.[4] Many of them feature annotations, abstract marks or symbols, words or brief comments.[5] In the vast majority of cases, the way these are used can be traced back to Valenciennes's recommendations.

The most common term in Friedrich's drawings from 1806/1807 onwards is the word "Horizont", often accompanied by a horizontal line.[6] Moreover, this horizon line, conceived as continuous, is punctuated within the image by a tiny circle labelled "Auge" or "Augpunkt" (eye or eye point) (fig. 2). An English translation of a passage from the German edition of Valenciennes's treatise would read as follows: "[T]hree lines must be fixed on the picture plane at the outset […]. The first of these lines is the groundline or baseline, which is the lowest line of the painting and runs parallel to the horizon line [*Horizont=Linie*]. The second is the horizon line, which is always assumed to be at eye level. The third is the vertical line, which is a perpendicular line that divides the painting into two equal parts and intersects the horizon line at a right angle and descends to the baseline. In perspective, the point at which the vertical line meets the horizon line is called the eye point [*Augpunkt*: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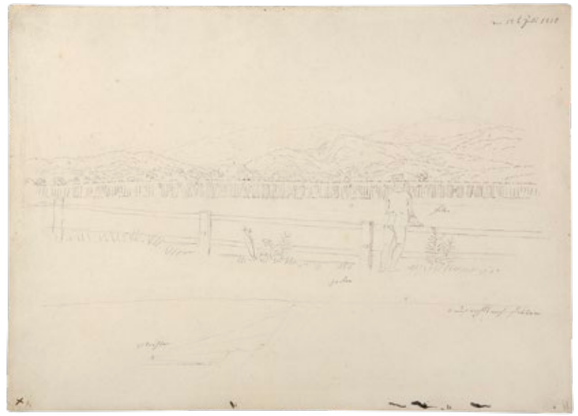
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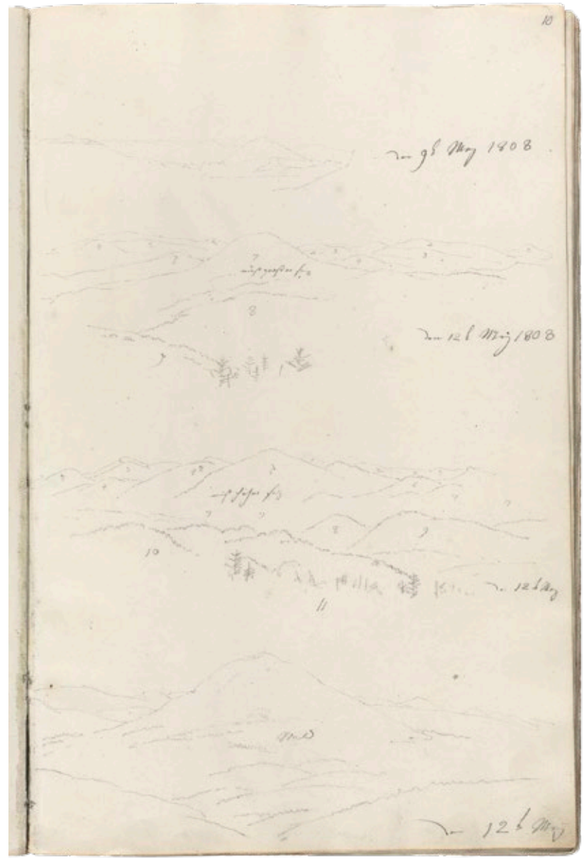
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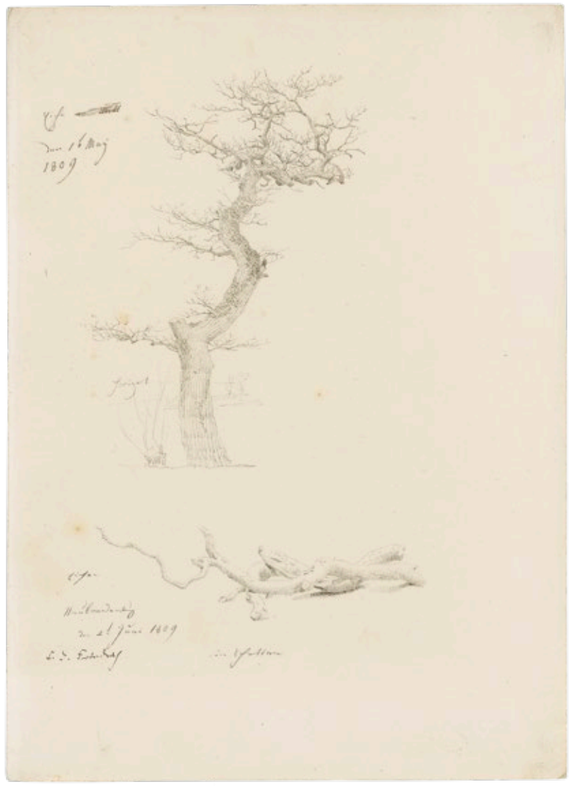
3 Caspar David Friedrich
Willow Struck by Lightning | 19 March 1812
Pencil, wash, watercolour on wove paper, 260 × 355 mm | Prague, Národní galerie, inv. DK 463 (G 660)

4 Caspar David Friedrich
Mountain Landscape with Figure (Schmiedeberg Ridge) | 13 July 1810
Pencil, 260 × 360 mm
Kunsthalle Mannheim, inv. G 445 (G 622)

5 Caspar David Friedrich
Landscape Studies 9–12 May 1808
Dresden Sketchbook of 1807–1812, sheet 10 | CAT 97 (G 564)

vanishing point]."[7] Looking at Friedrich's drawings, one wonders what exactly this ground line is supposed to mark. It can be found in his works from an early date and is often accompanied by the word "Vorgrund" (foreground), which also features in the German translation of Valenciennes (fig. 3).[8] In Valenciennes's treatise, it plays an important role because it is from this line that the distance to any buildings the artist wants to depict is measured. The distance, he states, should be three times the width of the buildings, for it is only from this distance that they would appear correct in perspective.[9] Friedrich's use of the ground line is a little different, although he, too, employed it as a marker of distance. It marks the line from which the artist has recorded the various elements/objects in the drawing – which is no different from Valenciennes – but Friedrich used it as the baseline for his system of rendering distances and spatial relationships, which his simple outline drawings could not in themselves convey. A case in point are his views of landscapes bordered in the distance by serried ranks of mountain ranges. While the overlaps of the silhouettes make it clear which mountains are closest to the viewer, they provide no clue to the distance between the individual ranges. Friedrich elucidated their spatial relationship with numbers decreasing from front to back (figs. 4, 5).[10]



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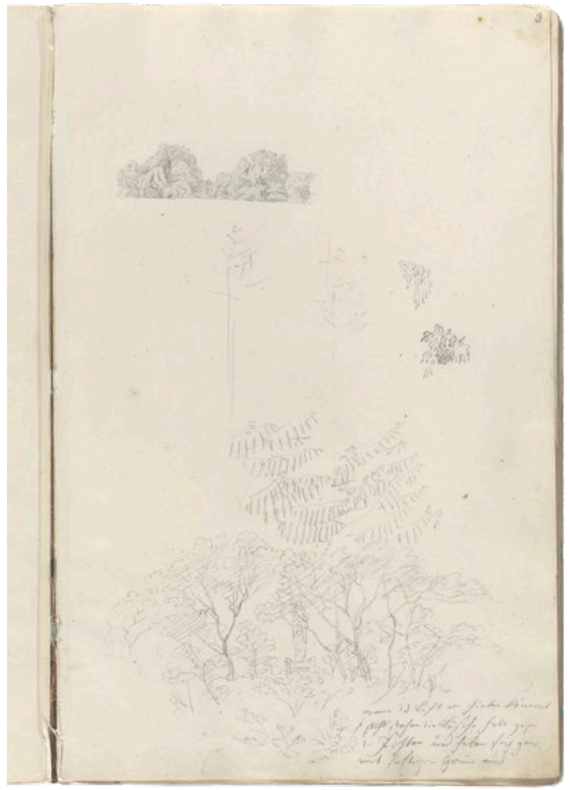

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Whenever the artist went on to use a given drawing as the basis for a painting, these sets of numbers allowed him to render the effects of aerial (or atmospheric) perspective with its loss of colour saturation and definition in the distance – Valenciennes wrote about this in detail.[11] The horizon line is in direct relation to the ground line. If the horizon is relatively close to the ground line, the objects are seen from below; if it is particularly high, they are seen from above. In Friedrich's drawings, the horizon line is not only clearly marked in views of wide open landscapes or the sea[12] but also in closely observed views of rocks and studies of trees, most notably in the Oslo Sketchbook of 1807,[13] and even in studies of tangled roots.[14] Strikingly, these markers of the horizon line can also be found in the most unlikely of places, for example on the lower part of a tree trunk (fig. 6). What should we make of this? For one, we have to imagine Friedrich as sitting on the ground as he drew, and, what's more, we have to recognise that whenever he translated a drawing into a painting, he consistently retained the perspective and spatial relationships recorded in the drawing. Thus, the horizon in the painting would be the one he had defined in the drawing. It was not uncommon for Friedrich to annotate his drawings not only with the time of day but also with the position of the sun and thus the fall and distribution of light and shadow (figs. 7–9).[15] And, if for once he did not indicate the horizon line, he would at least annotate the drawing with the words "unten" or "von unten" to make it clear that he had seen the object from below (fig. 10).[16]

Friedrich's reliance on the horizon line even in simple drawings of trees may well have been shored up by an entire paragraph in chapter 8 of the first volume of Valenciennes's book, which reads to the following effect in English: "The passages of foliage can easily be brought into perspective if one considers that the upper part is seen of those that are below the horizon line, that others which are squarely on the horizon line present neither the upper nor the lower part, and those which are above the horizon line are seen from below. Furthermore, with all trees that are reflected in water, the underside of the leaves is shown, etc."[17]

We may find this absolute commitment to nature somewhat excessive, but we should always keep in mind that Friedrich would have considered any deviation from God's Creation as sacrilegious. But how could he maintain this degree of fidelity to nature and at the same time transcend it in such

6 Caspar David Friedrich
Tree Studies | 1 May – 2 June 1809
Pencil, 360 × 259 mm | Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung, inv. C 1922/131 (G 584)

7 Caspar David Friedrich
Tree Studies and Park Landscape
Dresden Sketchbook of 1807–1812, sheet 3 | CAT 97 (G 557)

8 Caspar David Friedrich
Tree and Plant Studies
Dresden Sketchbook of 1807–1812, sheet 11
14 May 1808 | CAT 97 (G 565)

9 Caspar David Friedrich
Study of a Willow, Study of Two Branches
18 April – 2 June 1809 | CAT 102

10 Caspar David Friedrich
Forest, Krippen
Disbound Krippen Sketchbook | 20 July 1813 | CAT 128

Anke Fröhlich-Schauseil

TRAVELS IN SAXONY

5 | Detail

When Caspar David Friedrich first hiked through the Elbe Sandstone Mountains around 1800, encountering such landmarks as the Uttewalder Grund gorge, Hohenstein Castle, the Teufelsstein (Devil's Rock) near Krippen, and Mount Lilienstein, he was by no means the first to do so, and would already have found a certain amount of wanderers' 'infrastructure' to help him on his way. Wanderers, or 'ramblers', in search of the picturesque (*das Malerische*), followed paths that were used by local people and employed local guides. At night, they might have found lodgings with the resident pastor. Indeed clergymen such as Pastor Wilhelm Leberecht Götzinger and Pastor Carl Heinrich Nicolai were also the first compilers of travel guides.[1]

So-called 'Saxon Switzerland' was not the only popular destination. Since the first half of the 18th century, the Meissen area, the Mulde Valley, the Plauenscher Grund gorge near Dresden, the Ore Mountains, the Zittau Mountains, the 'Giant Mountains', and Bohemia had all been repeatedly explored by artists bearing sketchbooks, whose drawings then formed the basis for studio works.[2] Johann Alexander Thiele, in particular, created large-scale depictions, not only of striking castle-topped crags that dominate the landscape, like Lilienstein, Königstein, Wehlen and Oybin, but also of the Plauenscher Grund.[3] In washed graphite and pen-and-ink drawings, for example of Mount Lilienstein and the Königstein fortress, he and his pupils Christian Benjamin Müller and Johann Gottlieb Schön found a style that combined sensibility with factual objectivity.

THE PLAUENSCHER GRUND AND THARANDT

Like the Elbe Valley, the Plauenscher Grund near Dresden was another destination which attracted Caspar David Friedrich. Thiele had already portrayed it in a series of four vedute made between 1741 and 1747.[4] In the 18th century, the gorge still retained an almost arcadian charm, as Johann Christian Klengel's painting of 1796[5] and a brush drawing by Heinrich Theodor Wehle[6] show.

1 Caspar David Friedrich
Castle Ruins in Tharandt, Tree Study
1/2 May 1800 | CAT 40

2 Caspar David Friedrich
Ruins, Church and Houses in Tharandt
c. 1799 | CAT 21

Its attractions were drawn to public attention by Wilhelm Gottlieb Becker in his account *Der Plauische Grund* … (or "The Plauenscher Grund near Dresden with Reference to Natural History and the Art of Landscape Gardening"), published in 1799.[7] It was illustrated with copperplates engraved by Johann Adolph Darnstedt after drawings by Klengel.[8]

Before Plauen, Potschappel and Rabenau became popular, Tharandt, with its medieval castle ruins, was the better-known destination for walkers. The ensemble of ruins, church and houses was depicted by Adrian Zingg[9] and Klengel, as well as by etchers and copper engravers like Philipp Veith or Carl August Richter and Johann Friedrich Wizani, who reproduced the motif in prints. Anton Graff, Carl Gustav Carus, Christian Gottlob Hammer, Karl Gottfried Traugott Faber and Ludwig Richter also found motifs for their compositions here.

Friedrich depicted the ruins on several occasions (fig. 1), including in a drawing on a sheet now in Berlin, where he adopted a viewpoint that Klengel had already selected for a painting – although under different light conditions.[10] Friedrich probably knew Klengel's composition, at least in the form of one of three reproductive prints made after it,[11] one of which, a copper engraving, to illustrate the above-mentioned book by Becker.[12] In 1799 Friedrich made a pencil drawing of the ruins which he then went over in pen and ink (fig. 2), omitting, however, the tree-dotted slope above the line of the lake shore, which appears in pencil only. In another drawing, meanwhile, he did the opposite, going over the slope in pen and ink, but not the ruins.[13] Thus, in each drawing, he concentrated on a different part of an envisaged whole resembling Klengel's model.

Yet Friedrich also depicted the glassworks, the Königsmühle and Neumühle flourmills and the powder mill, modest buildings in the Plauenscher Grund that presaged its transformation into an industrial zone (fig. 7, p. 152).[14] The composition of these gouaches, showing centre ground and

3 Johann Georg Wagner
Hilly Landscape with Boulder, Cottages, and Flock of Sheep on the Road
Tempera, 203 × 242 mm
Vienna, Albertina Museum, Grafische Sammlung, inv. 4752

4 Caspar David Friedrich
Rock Studies and Detail of a Gothic Church
3 September 1800 (left)

Natural Arch in the Uttewalder Grund
28 August 1800 (right) | CAT 43

6 Christian August Günther
The Natural Arch in the Uttewalder Grund North of Wehlen in Saxon Switzerland | 1800
Page from Brückner's *Piktoreskische Reisen durch Sachsen*, 93 × 61 mm (image); 161 × 101 mm (sheet)
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Inv. A 1995-6773

5 Caspar David Friedrich
Natural Arch in the Uttewalder Grund
c. 1801 | CAT 44

background with trees and rocks positioned on either side, is relatively conventional; and indeed, there were precedents for this *veduta*-like approach, for example in Carl Gottfried Nestler's series of engravings *Prospecte des Plauschen Grundes bey Dresden*,[15] and the series of views after Klengel's washed pen-and-ink drawings.[16] One of Friedrich's gouaches was itself used as the model for a hand-coloured outline etching.[17]

To these veduta-like works, Friedrich brought a feeling for colour that gave them a painterly charm, even before he made the switch to oil painting. In Saxony, role models in the use of gouache were to be found not only in artists like Jakob Philipp Hackert but also in painters working for the porcelain manufactory at Meissen – the likes of Christian Wilhelm Ernst Dietrich (called Dietricy), Johann Georg Wagner, Carl Gottlob Ehrlich and Johann Friedrich Nagel. Despite his early death in 1767, Wagner was still well known in artist circles and among art collectors; his gouaches, influenced by Dietrich, his uncle and teacher, display the loose brushwork and sophisticated use of colour (fig. 3) of 'canvas painting on paper'.

THE NATURAL ARCH TO THE UTTEWALDER GRUND GORGE IN SAXON SWITZERLAND

When Friedrich embarked on his earliest hikes, beginning in 1799, his interest in the landscapes of Dresden's wider surroundings was inspired by Karl August Engelhardt's illustrated *Malerische Reise durch Sachsen* (or "Picturesque Journeys through Saxony"),[18] with copperplate prints by Philipp Veith, and Johann Jakob Brückner's *Pitoreskische Reisen durch Sachsen* … (or "Picturesque Travels through Saxony or the Natural Beauties of Saxon Regions as Gathered on a Journey with Friends"), containing etchings by Christian August Günther.[19] In the two books, Veith and Günther, both pupils of Zingg, used standard graphic techniques of printmaking to reproduce striking landscape features in fully realised pictorial compositions. When Caspar David Friedrich

drew the natural arch at the Uttewalder Grund on 28 August 1800 (fig. 4),[20] he may already have seen Günther's version of the same motif. At any rate, the sepia drawing he made based on the sketch (fig. 5) would suggest so, because, like Günther's etching, it, too, shows two figures reacting to the sight of the rock formation by raising their arms to point at it (fig. 6). A comparison of Friedrich's sepia drawing with Zingg's depiction of the Zscherregrund rock formation,[21] where an idyllic pastoral scene is glimpsed through the rock arch, makes the contrast between the mighty, lowering rocks and the tiny human figures in Friedrich's drawing more fully apparent. This proportional exaggeration was not echoed in any of

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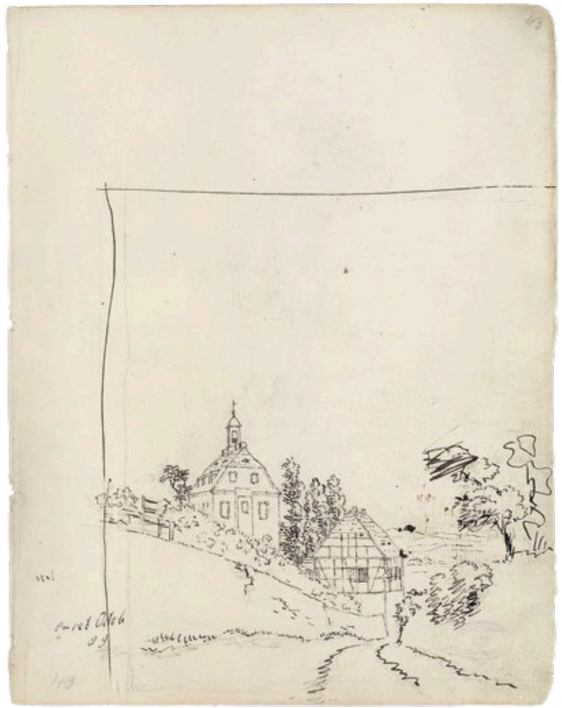

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7 Caspar David Friedrich
Small Landscape in Circular Format
c. 1794 | CAT 2

8 Caspar David Friedrich
Landscape with Footbridge
c. 1801 | CAT 62

9 Caspar David Friedrich
Landscape with Manor House
12 October 1799 | CAT 27

the drawings or prints by the many later artists to visit the Utterwalder Grund, like Carus, Hammer and Johan Christian Dahl. In his painting of the Grund, however, Friedrich's pupil August Heinrich pursued exaggeration in another direction by reproducing every single sunlit leaf in the greatest possible individual detail.[22]

LANDSCAPE ETCHINGS AND STUDIES AROUND 1800

Like Günther, Friedrich also tried his hand at etching. While still a student, he had made tiny circular etchings of landscapes with trees (fig. 7).[23] "Most of Friedrich's etchings reflect the park theory of the Age of Sentimentalism," was how Werner Sumowski summed up the conventionalism of Friedrich's early Dresden etchings. Sumowski pointed to Christian Cai Lorenz Hirschfeld's *Theory of Garden Art* and such etchings series as Johann Adolph Darnstedt's *Views from the Seifersdorf Valley* of 1793 as emblematic works of the period and highlighted the "stylistic borrowing from Hackert's Rügen landscapes and Veith's vedute" in Friedrich's etchings (fig. 8).[24] Technically, in landscape etching, the young Friedrich was experimenting with a medium with an illustrious tradition in Saxony, its exponents including Samuel Bottschild, Johann Alexander Thiele, Charles François Hutin, Bernardo Bellotto, Adam Friedrich Oeser, Adrian Zingg, Johann Christian Klengel and Christoph Nathe. Indeed, Thiele and Bellotto had produced whole series of etchings.[25] Christian Ludwig von Hagedorn dabbled in the technique, while Dietrich, Klengel and Nathe all left large numbers of etched works.[26] Their guides to the art of landscape etching had been the masters of the previous century, such as Rembrandt, Alaert van Everdingen, Jacob van Ruisdael, Herman van Swanevelt, Anthonie Waterloo and Jan Both. With their technical virtuosity and artistic freedom, Klengel's landscape etchings were, in turn, an important inspiration for later *peintre-graveurs*.

In the case of Zingg's technique of washed outline etching, a whole workshop eventually ensured the production of a swelling stream of pictures,[27] culminating in, amongst others, Carl August and Ludwig Richter's *70 Mahlerische An und Aussichten* … (or "Seventy Picturesque Views of and from the Surroundings of Dresden within a Radius of Six to Eight Miles")[28] of 1820 and *30 An und Aussichten* … (or "Thirty Views and Vistas to Accompany the Pocket Guide to Saxon Switzerland")[29] of 1823, in which the father and son popularised Zingg's style of landscape depiction in a small format, producing charming, precise images that managed to convey narrative content and atmosphere at the same time.

In the years around 1800, Friedrich completed a series of outline etchings based on preparatory pen-and-ink drawings. A *Landscape with Manor House*, dated 12 October 1799[30] and identified as a scene in Dresden-Loschwitz near the bridge known as the Mordgrundbrücke (fig. 9), served as the model for an etching now known from a trial proof preserved in Berlin. Friedrich cursorily marked the outline of the projected picture field in pen.[31] Preparation for the etching involved, as before, going over the initial pencil drawing in pen and ink, bringing out the contrast between the cubic forms of the buildings and the abbreviated pencil notation indicating the foliage of the trees.

Similar in choice of motif and style is an etching dedicated to Friedrich's Greifswald teacher Johann Gottfried Quistorp (fig. 10), which is very closely modelled on a drawing of 4 August 1799.[32] The empty middle ground in this work also resembles areas in later paintings, like *Morning Mist*, where thick swathes of mist partly block the view and the mountain peak appears to float in the picture space, making it impossible to reach (fig. 16, p. 314). Friedrich was not the only artist to adopt this pictorial approach, as an aquatint etching by Christoph Nathe[33] demonstrates (fig. 11). Here, too, there is a break in the foreground, separating brown-tinted passages from areas with simple etched contours. Other examples of Nathe's etched works, comprising over 100 plates, also show similarities with Friedrich's etchings.[34]

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10 Caspar David Friedrich
Farmhouses by a Hillside
1799 | CAT 23

11 Christoph Nathe
View of the Tower of the Frauenkirche from Southern Section of the Görlitz Moat | undated
Etching and aquatint in brown,
167 × 204 mm (plate)
Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz,
Graphisches Kabinett, inv. 31344

12 Caspar David Friedrich
Landscape with Ruins and Two Figures
29 September 1802 | CAT 63

Florian Illies

THE ABSENT DRESDEN

Just as interesting as what great artists choose to paint is what they patently leave out. Surprisingly, Caspar David Friedrich, who lived in Dresden from 1798 to 1840, did not paint any urban scenes of the city in which he spent most of his life, nor any classic vedute that show its famous silhouette. This is unusual for two reasons: Friedrich's friend and neighbour, the painter Johan Christian Dahl had no such qualms. Around 1830, he regularly captured the magnificent sequence of the city's spires and towers, the Frauenkirche, the Hofkirche, and the Residenzschloss as seen from the right bank of the Elbe – a view immortalised by Canalleto's nephew, Bernardo Bellotto, in numerous variations – casting it in the pictorial language of Romanticism with low-angle perspectives and dramatic skies (fig. 1). We have similar, veduta-like views by Friedrich of his native Greifswald[1] and of the city of Neubrandenburg,[2] from where his parents hailed. In each of these, Friedrich chose to put some distance between himself and the city, capturing its silhouette in reverent detail from a low vantage point and positioning it in the middle ground of his composition.

It would appear that the 'Canaletto view' of a 'Florence on the Elbe' as enshrined by the Italian court painter was too prescriptive for Friedrich the artist and seasoned Dresden resident.[3] Just how much Friedrich engaged with Bellotto and the legacy of the Canaletto style is demonstrated by a hitherto overlooked adaptation: Friedrich drew on Bellotto's large-format painting of *The Market Square of Pirna*[4] for a highly unusual bird's-eye-view watercolour showing his own family milling about the market square in Greifswald.[5]

Although Friedrich lived in Dresden for 42 years and was an indefatigably obsessive draughtsman, there are virtually no pencil drawings of the city by the artist. Only once, on 23 April 1800, did he produce a small pencil sketch that meticulously captures the pinnacles of the Hausmannsturm, the Hofkirche, the dome of the Frauenkirche, and the ridge turret of the Old Town Hall (fig. 2).[6] It is precisely these pinnacles that would later make an understated appearance in two famous paintings, rising in the hazy distance behind a composition-defining hill in the foreground, which Friedrich used to mask the architectural beauty of the city that was clearly overwhelming him. In his *Hill with Boggy Ground near Dresden* (fig. 3), it is the prosaic, freshly ploughed soil and a bare-branched orchard that obscure the distant city bathed in a milky, pale-blue light. In his *Evening Star*,[7] on the other hand, it is a young boy on the crest of the hill that attracts our full attention – the tops of the spires of Dresden's churches are hidden behind the hill, inconspicuously in line with the soaring poplar trees to the left and right.

Only the Augustusbrücke – seen from his home at An der Elbe 33 – became a motif for Friedrich – most strikingly so in the painting formerly in the collection of the Hamburger Kunsthalle (*The Augustus Bridge in Dresden*).[8] Caspar David Friedrich's rejection of Dresden as a sub-

1 Johan Christian Dahl
View of Dresden by Moonlight
1839 | CAT 243

2 Caspar David Friedrich
Spruce Study (left); Hausmannsturm, Tower of the Hofkirche, Dome of the Frauenkirche, Ridge Turret of the Altstadt Town Hall (right)
Disbound Berlin Sketchbook II, pp. 56, 57
23 April 1800 | CAT 29

ject is at its most subtle in his painting *Woman at a Window* (fig. 28, p. 204). He has deliberately positioned his wife Caroline in front of the window in such a way that we cannot look out onto the Elbe, onto the riverbank known as the Neustädter Ufer. Friedrich keeps the viewer trapped inside, just as he himself hardly ever left his studio. Only at dusk did he venture outside, because then the overpowering silhouette of the city was muted, and he could train his original gaze on the world in the twilight.

1 Caspar David Friedrich, *Meadows near Greifswald*, 1821/1822, oil on canvas, 34.5 × 48.3 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, inv. HK-1047 (BS/J 285).
2 Caspar David Friedrich, *Neubrandenburg in the Morning Mist*, 1816/1817, oil on canvas, 91 × 72 cm, Greifswald, Pommersches Landesmuseum (BS/J 225).
3 Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto, *Dresden from the Right Bank of the Elbe Below the Augustus Bridge*, 1748, oil on canvas, 133 × 237 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Gal.-Nr. 606.
4 Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto, *The Market Square of Pirna*, 1753/1754, oil on canvas, 136 × 239.5 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Gal.-Nr. 623.
5 Caspar David Friedrich, *The Greifswald Market Square*, 1818, watercolour on paper, 54.5 × 67 cm, Pommersches Landesmuseum, Greifswald (BS/J 251).
6 These forms are also to be seen in his 1824 oil sketch *Evening (Sunset behind the Dresden Hofkirche)*, 1824, oil on canvas, 20.8 × 24.7 cm, private collection (BS/J 320).
7 Caspar David Friedrich, *Evening Star*, c. 1830, oil on canvas, 33 × 45.2 cm, Frankfurt am Main, Freies Deutsches Hochstift / Frankfurter Goethe-Museum, inv. IV-1950-007 (BS/J 389).
8 Caspar David Friedrich, *The Augustus Bridge in Dresden*, c. 1830, oil on canvas, measurements unknown, Hamburger Kunsthalle (destroyed in fire in Munich 1931), inv. E-1054 (BS/J 384).

3 Caspar David Friedrich
Hill with Boggy Ground near Dresden
1824/1825 | CAT 160

Holger Birkholz

CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH AND THE OLD MASTERS

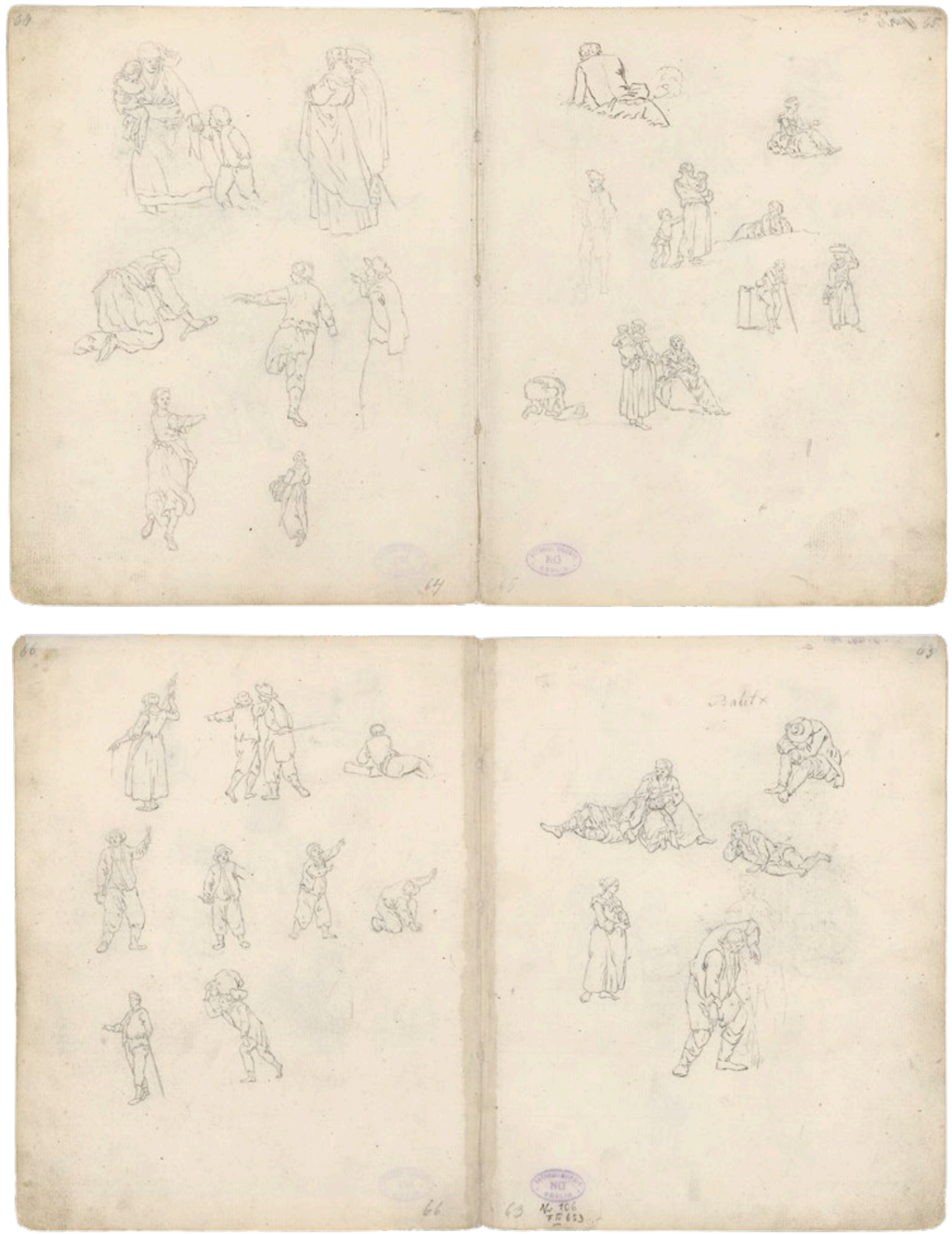
In a letter Caspar David Friedrich wrote to King Friedrich August I of Saxony in 1816 regarding his appointment as a member of the Academy, the artist was keen to emphasise that Dresden's "most excellent art treasures"[1] were one of the reasons why, in 1798, he had come to the city in the first place. Even at the time of his earliest success, Friedrich's work was considered against the wider backdrop of the leading landscape painters of the past, chief among them Jacob van Ruisdael, Salvator Rosa, and Claude Lorrain.[2] Irrespective of the art-theoretical discourse of the time, we can make out concrete correlations between Friedrich's works and those of the Old Masters that he would have seen at the Dresden Gemäldegalerie. He adopted common tropes such as sunsets or the graveyard scene, picked up compositional schemes and sketched staffage figures and even a rock formation he found in landscape paintings on exhibit there.

Studying the Old Masters and copying their works was fundamental to the basic training of aspiring artists at the time. During his drawing lessons with Johann Gottfried Quistorp in Greifswald, Friedrich had drawn from prints,[3] and even at the Copenhagen Academy, the curriculum consisted largely of drawing from prints and plaster casts.[4] As a result, Friedrich was very sceptical about the merits of copying. Many years later, around 1830, he was to remark: "Those who have esprit do not copy others."[5] And of his own students, he demanded a high degree of self-sufficiency, which he only managed to acquire in himself once he had left the classroom behind.[6]

When Friedrich arrived in Dresden in 1798, he encountered a markedly different approach in the person of Adrian Zingg, who, unlike his previous teachers in Copenhagen, advocated the rigorous study of nature and rejected emulating the Old Masters, despite his students' proximity to one of the very best picture galleries north of the Alps. Writing to his friend Johan Ludwig Lund, with whom he had studied in Copenhagen, Friedrich reported that Johann Carl August Richter had told him that he (Richter) had "not yet seen the gallery or the Kupferstich Kabinett, because old Zing[g] thought it was unnecessary."[7]

Friedrich evidently took a different view. He paid regular visits to the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, and not only does his work bear witness to the

1 | 2 Caspar David Friedrich
Figure Studies. Drawings after Staffage in Netherlandish Paintings in the Dresden Picture Gallery
c. 1800 | CAT 30

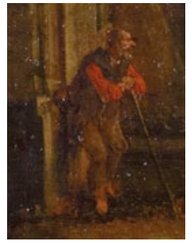


3 Adriaen Fransz. Boudewijns and Peeter Bout
Well on the Lake Shore
Not dated | CAT 216

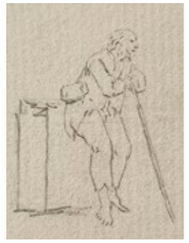
impact some of the paintings in the collection had on him, those visits are also mentioned in written sources. The Russian poet and imperial court tutor Vasily Zhukovsky, for example, described visits to the picture gallery with Friedrich in April 1821. To his surprise, Friedrich "could not name the painters" of many of the works, "but he found beauty or defects in numerous paintings that only those who have looked into the textbook of nature would ever notice."[8] He also reported on Friedrich's assessment of three religious works in the gallery – Titian's *The Tribute Money*,[9] Carlo Dolci's *Christ Blessing the Sacraments*,[10] and Ercole de' Roberti's painting of *The Ascent to Calvary*[11] – all of which revolved around the question of the truth of feeling,[12] a topic that Friedrich would later address in his own written work of art criticism.[13]

STAFFAGE

Friedrich's struggles with the human figure and his alleged inability to render it convincingly has become something of a trope among Friedrich scholars and is based primarily on the elongated figures in his Schiller illustrations of 1801.[14] In 1811, it was even claimed that some of the figures in Friedrich's landscape paintings had in fact been painted by his friend, the artist Georg Friedrich Kersting.[15] Friedrich's engagement with the figures that enliven his landscapes runs through his entire oeuvre – from the figure studies on a sketchbook sheet of 1799/1800 (fig. 1) to the abbreviated marks he used to indicate the size of people in his landscape studies and the two unrealised wanderers in *The Large Enclosure near Dresden* of 1832 (fig. 15, p. 289).[16]



4 Adriaen Fransz. Boudewijns, Peeter Bout
Well on the Lake Shore
Not dated | CAT 261
Detail from fig. 3



5 Caspar David Friedrich
Figure Studies. Drawings after Staffage in Netherlandish Paintings in the Dresden Picture Gallery | 1800 | CAT 30
Detail from fig. 1

6 Caspar David Friedrich
Mountain Landscape with Rainbow
c. 1809/1810 | CAT 101

As is not uncommon in Friedrich's work, lines can be drawn from otherwise perfectly inconspicuous early drawings or studies to much later periods of his career, several decades later.[17] Four pages of a sketchbook from his early years in Dresden around 1800 (fig. 2) show human figures drawn in a simple outline style, which Werner Sumowski astutely recognised as having been copied from various paintings in the Dresden gallery.[18] Lifted primarily from Netherlandish 17th-century pictures, these small anonymous figures enliven landscapes and harbour scenes. Friedrich's selection of these incidental figures in various poses and with different expressions is distributed even-handedly across the pages of his sketchbook. Their arrangement and isolation seems analytical, as if he wanted to collect a stockbook of possible human poses.[19] In so doing, he plucked them out of the context of the original composition, where, among other things, they had functioned as perspectival markers, and he lined them up in neat rows for future reference.[20] One sheet is inscribed with the name "Bout",[21] probably added later by an unknown hand to identify some of the figures gathered there as being based on works in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie. The works in question were painted by two artists working in collaboration: Adriaen Fransz. Boudewijns was responsible for the landscape, while Peeter Bout painted the lively staffage. These two 17th-century Flemish painters frequently collaborated and formed a highly successful partnership. Five of the originally eight paintings by the two artists are still in the Dresden collection today.[22] Some of the figures sketched by Friedrich can be found in their canvases.[23] Friedrich drew inspiration from them, and they resurfaced – albeit with some modifications – in several of his paintings many years later.

In a painting by Boudewijns and Bout, the figure of the beggar hanging around a harbour and leaning on a stick (figs. 3, 4) is taken out of its original context for the sketchbook sheet (fig. 5). One of the reasons why Friedrich was interested in this figure may have been that it reminded him of wayfarers he had encountered on his travels and captured in his drawings.[24] This figure makes an appearance in several of his paintings, most recognisably in his *Mountain Landscape with Rainbow* of 1809/1810 (fig. 6).

7 Adriaen Fransz. Boudewijns, Peeter Bout
Well on the Lake Shore | not dated | CAT 261
Detail from fig. 3

8 Caspar David Friedrich
Figure Studies. Drawings after Staffage in Netherlandish Paintings in the Dresden Picture Gallery | 1800 | CAT 30
Detail from fig. 1

9 Caspar David Friedrich
Chalk Cliffs on Rügen | 1818
Detail, oil on canvas, 90.7 × 71 cm
Kunst Museum Winterthur,
inv. 165 (BS/J 257)

What the beggar in Boudewijns' painting and Friedrich's wanderer have in common is that they rest both hands on a stick while leaning their weight backwards – the beggar against a building facade, the wanderer against a rock – which results in the distinctive stooped posture that defines them both. In making this figure his own, Friedrich also gave it a sartorial makeover. Gone are the beggar's almost bucolic rags; instead the figure is reborn as a fashionably dressed city dweller with white nankeen trousers, red jacket, and a black top hat (a new accessory at the time). The figure's blond hair and prominent sideburns suggest a self-portrait.[25]

Looking at the figure studies, it is evident that Friedrich's interest was primarily piqued by the poses and postures of the figures in the paintings. A case in point is his drawing of a figure that is barely discernible in the painting by Boudewijns and Bout, as it barely stands out in the overall commotion and almost merges with the brownish tones of the background (fig. 7).[26] This figure is on all fours. Friedrich copied it in his sketchbook page (fig. 8), alongside the figure of a woman with a child in her arms standing nearby. He later returned to both figures and depicted them in isolation.[27] At some point the sheet was saturated with a substance that rendered it transparent. This made it possible to transfer the outline to another – loose – piece of paper, and subsequently to a painting.[28] However, the figures on the sheet appear rather too small for that. Their size is clearly out of proportion with the only known use of the motif of a figure crawling on all fours in Friedrich's oeuvre. In his painting *Chalk Cliffs on Rügen*, Friedrich reversed the figure (fig. 9) and positioned it in the centre of the foreground. Thus, the front leg of the boy in the drawing has become the far leg of the man looking out over the cliff edge in the painting. The same reversal applies to the arms; the head has remained half-concealed by the shoulder. Although the changes in size, age, and clothing make the crawling figure's origins in the Flemish painting far from obvious, the rarity of the pose argues in favour of a connection.

The couple standing close together in Friedrich's painting *The Cemetery* (fig. 10) underwent a similar kind of transformation. The artist found the inspiration for this figural group in a painting by Philips Wouwerman (fig. 12). Once again, the original context in the Old Master painting is completely different, and the source would have been far from obvious, had Friedrich not singled them out in the drawing (fig. 13), before reworking the figures to make them his own. His particular interest in the couple is also borne out by a tracing in which he isolated the two figures (fig. 11). Here he departed from his model even more than in the crawling figure: whereas in Wouwerman's work the man is still looking over his shoulder to face the woman, in Friedrich's work the two are looking in the same direction. But the overall character and shape of the figures, defined by their cloaks, remain similar. The woman's hair tied in a bun and the man's hat or beret are comparable. In adapting the drawing for the painting, Friedrich moved away from his visual source and translated it into a form that suited his artistic vision.

10 Caspar David Friedrich
The Cemetery | c. 1825
Detail from fig. 8, p. 225

11 Caspar David Friedrich
Man with Walking Stick, a Lady, Two Girls
c. 1825 | CAT 173

12 Philips Wouwerman
Fishermen on the Beach
CAT 370

13 Caspar David Friedrich
Figure Studies. Drawings after Staffage in Netherlandish Paintings in the Dresden Picture Gallery | 1800 | CAT 30
Detail from fig. 1

Holger Birkholz

A PERFECT WORK OF ART: THE TETSCHEN ALTARPIECE

"Have you finished the altarpiece? I would like to see it, I think it will make a great impression,"[1] Friedrich's sister Catharina Dorothea Sponholz asked her brother in October 1808. The question reflects the high expectations placed on the painting, especially because works of art were rarely the subject of the family's correspondence. Friedrich must therefore have told his sister about working on his "altarpiece" and the special significance he attached to it.

When Friedrich's painting *The Cross in the Mountains* (fig. 1) – known in German as the *Tetschener Altar* since its sale to the von Thun-Hohenstein family – was first presented to the public on Christmas Day of 1808, it caused a sensation. By contrast, the earliest sketches in which the artist developed his idea for the composition are quite unspectacular and offer little indication of what they would culminate in. In 1799, Friedrich had seen a wayside cross in a rocky crevice (fig. 14, p. 138) and captured a few scattered boulders, probably somewhere in the vicinity of Dresden (fig. 10, p. 50). Inspired by the Honigstein in Saxon Switzerland,[2] Friedrich gradually developed the motif of the central, pyramidal mountain peak surmounted by a cross.[3] He worked through the theme in numerous variations[4] until the individual elements came together in the sepia *Cross in the Mountains* (fig. 50, p. 62) around 1806. When he decided to execute this composition in oil, however, Friedrich changed most of the trees in the picture, among them spruces he had drawn as recently as 1807.[5] Only the tallest tree, drawn in 1804,[6] remained in its position. It dominates not only the centre of the two versions of *The Cross in the Mountains* but also that of the painting *View over the Elbe Valley* (fig. 2), made around the same time. The revised spruces are slimmer than originally envisaged, which accentuates the heavenward momentum of the composition, as do the new addition of visible rays of light and the shift from the round arch of the painting to the pointed arch of the frame.

1 Caspar David Friedrich
The Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altarpiece)
1807/1808 | CAT 99

2 Caspar David Friedrich
View over the Elbe Valley
1807 | CAT 96

Friedrich worked on *The Cross in the Mountains* during a period after 1805, when two altarpiece projects became important to him: Kosegarten's commission for the riverside chapel in Vitt on the island of Rügen, which ultimately went to Philipp Otto Runge but remained unfinished,[7] and the altar of the Marienkirche in Greifswald, over which a copy of Correggio's *Nativity* by Friedrich August von Klinkowström was installed in 1811.[8] In Vitt as in Greifswald, King Gustav IV Adolf of Sweden played an important role in the planning of the projects – for Western Pomerania would remain Swedish until 1815. This also explains Theresia von Thun-Hohenstein's remark in a letter to her mother: "Sadly, the beautiful cross is not to be had! The dutiful Norseman has painted it in honour of his king […]."[9] Apparently, Friedrich, who saw himself first and foremost as Pomeranian and therefore as a Swedish subject, envisioned the staunchly Protestant Gustav IV Adolf of Sweden as the dedicatee of *The Cross in the Mountains*[10] and therefore initially did not want to sell it to the Thun-Hohensteins. However, with the invasion of Finland by Russian troops in February 1808, the political situation became precarious for the Swedish king and Friedrich saw the prospects for the work's original intended purpose dwindle, and so he resolved to sell it to the newlywed couple Theresia and Franz Anton von Thun-Hohenstein after all,[11] even though they belonged to the Catholic Bohemian aristocracy. However, Friedrich probably sympathised with the politics of von Thun-Hohenstein, who had fought against Napoleon in the Imperial Austrian army[12] before his marriage. Meanwhile, for her part as a practiced pastel painter and copyist, Theresia would have fully appreciated that the painting represented a revolutionary break with art-historical convention.

At Christmas 1808 – probably at the suggestion of his circle of friends – Friedrich put the work on public display in his studio. He placed it on a table draped with a black cloth and curtained off a window to recreate the "twilight of a chapel lit by lamps"[13] and thus heighten the mysterious glow of the painting and its frame.[14] Helene Marie von Kügelgen reported: "Everyone who entered the room was moved as if they were entering a temple."[15] This presentation transformed the artist's studio into a devotional space, artistic practice into an act of worship[16] – and did so not long after Napoleon had severely curtailed the power of the Church, with the dissolution of the monasteries in conquered territories in 1803. This was another reason for the indignant reaction of the art critic Friedrich Wilhelm Basilius von Ramdohr, who took exception to Caspar David Friedrich's "arrant presumption" and denounced *The Cross in the Mountains* as a landscape painting trying "to sneak into the church and creep onto the altar."[17]

Friedrich's solemn staging of his altarpiece was entirely in keeping with early Romantic ideas about the interpenetration of the arts in a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (even though that term would only be coined some years later).[18] A similar vision was shared by Friedrich's friend Philipp Otto Runge for his cycle devoted to the *Times of Day* (fig. 7, p. 323). Another link between *The Cross in the Mountains* and Runge's *Times of Day* is the relationship between frame and image. In Friedrich's work, these follow different semantics: traditional Christian imagery in the frame and allegorical landscape painting on the canvas. In a watercolour (fig. 3) with a comparable compositional arrangement that evidently draws from *The Cross in the Mountains*, Friedrich laid greater stress on the overall symmetry of the piece. But in that watercolour, the landscape appears more ornamental and less convincing, which underscores its purely allegorical function.[19] Looking to create programmatic images of the new religiosity of the age of Romanticism, both Runge and Friedrich drew on Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (fig. 4), with its light-flushed divine sky populated

3 Caspar David Friedrich
Marienkirche Stralsund, Design for an Altarpiece (design for an altarpiece on The Cross in the Mountains)
1817/1818 | CAT 138

4 Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Müller after Raphael
The Sistine Madonna
1809–1816 | CAT 298

Holger Birkholz

“AS LONG AS WE REMAIN SERFS TO PRINCES”

FRIEDRICH’S POLITICAL CONVICTIONS

During the Napoleonic Wars, Caspar David Friedrich was a supporter of the German Wars of Liberation, both by his own testimony and in his art. After Napoleon’s defeat in 1813, the restoration and subsequent resurgence of the European monarchies led to a change of emphasis in this political stance. Friedrich became a supporter of the struggle for freedom championed by the fledgling student movement of the time. The tenth anniversary of the victory at the Battle of Leipzig in 1823 was particularly significant in this political outlook, as was the resignation that the ideals of national renewal were unlikely to be realised under the prevailing political and social order of the day. The revolution of 1830 and the enactment of the Saxon Constitution of 1831, however, offered a brief glimmer of hope.

THE ROBBERS

In Dresden, Friedrich seemed keen from an early stage to express his political views in his art. In 1801, at one of the first of many annual exhibitions at the Dresden Academy in which he would participate, he showed his artistic rendering of the final scene of Schiller’s drama *The Robbers*.[1] The play had caused a sensation at its first performance in Mannheim, as it was seen as a revolutionary critique of the feudal social order, and its first performance in Dresden in 1784 had also left the audience in a state of shock.[2] By choosing this of all subjects, Friedrich revealed for the first time the anti-monarchist views that would remain fundamental to his political convictions.[3] He may have been introduced to Schiller’s drama and political ideas by Christian Gottfried Körner, whose house in Dresden was an important meeting place for critically minded intellectuals and artists,[4] and where Schiller himself had found a refuge a few decades earlier, from 1785 to 1787.

1 Caspar David Friedrich
Dolmen in the Snow
1807 | CAT 95

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

A letter from Friedrich August von Klinkowström to Philipp Otto Runge, dated 18 June 1806, reveals the extent to which the political circumstances of the Napoleonic Wars affected Friedrich’s health, as his painter friend reports: “Friedrich wrote to me after his illness, which I believe was caused by his anger over national affairs.”[5] In December 1805, the Battle of Austerlitz had led to the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation as part of the armistice negotiations. At the time, Friedrich was on the island of Rügen, where he developed a growing interest in pre-Christian history and drew the remains of its megalithic culture.[6] On his return to Dresden, he produced the large sepia drawing *Dolmen by the Sea* (fig. 8, p. 102), combining the scene of a Stone Age site[7] with drawings of three oak trees that he had previously sketched elsewhere.[8] The evocation of a distant heroic past during the 1806 war reinforced the sense of a patriotic theme.[9] Reviewing this sepia drawing in 1807, Carl Bertuch is said to have described the trees as “three great unshakable heroic characters”.[10]

Not much later Friedrich transformed this scene into a winter landscape in one of his first

2 Caspar David Friedrich
Tombs of Fallen Freedom Fighters (Tombs of the Ancient Heroes) | 1812
Oil on canvas, 49.3 × 69.8 cm
Hamburger Kunsthalle,
inv. HK-1048 (BS/J 205)

oil paintings, *Dolmen in the Snow* (fig. 1), emphasising the temporal element. He replaced the scattered rocks with a megalithic tomb near Gützkow, which he had first drawn in 1801.[11] A comparison of the two illustrates how he made the transition from sepia drawing to oil painting, with new aspects emerging in the process: the landscape, frozen under a blanket of snow, reaches up to the blue sky, which stretches over the bare oak trees, as a portent of the spring that follows winter. In October 1806, the change of seasons took on a political dimension, with Friedrich expressing hope for the Wars of Liberation: "The German spirit will work its way out of the storm and the clouds."[12] Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert noted that Friedrich's studio was a meeting place for like-minded people, "where the raging of the external political storms could frequently be heard."[13] *The Cross in the Mountains* (fig. 50, p. 62), the other major sepia drawing of this period, also alludes to political concerns through its religious theme, which, in keeping with its Christian iconography, revolves around salvation – the salvation of the people from the horrors of war. This becomes even more evident in the version subsequently executed in oil, which is much more elaborate in character and can therefore be understood as a programmatic painting. There are vital motific similarities between *Dolmen in the Snow* and *The Cross in the Mountains* (often known in German as the *Tetschen Altarpiece*) (fig. 1, p. 239): the oaks have been replaced by slender spruces and the megalithic tomb by a cross. Both represent a thematic link between Christian faith and political conviction. Friedrich originally wrote to Theresia von Brühl, who wished to buy the painting from the artist in 1808, that it was not for sale as it was intended for 'his king'.[14] He was referring to Gustav IV Adolf of Sweden, who had successfully driven Napoleon's troops out of Pomerania in 1805, before being defeated by the French aggressor in 1806. Against this background, *The Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altarpiece)* proves to be a "political painting with an anti-Napoleonic bias".[15]

PATRIOTIC PICTURES

With the escalation of the situation in 1813, the retreat of Napoleon's army from Russia and the opposing alliance of Russia, Prussia, Austria and Sweden, Friedrich chose more explicit subjects for his patriotic sentiments. When the painting *Tombs of Fallen Freedom Fighters* (fig. 2) was exhibited at the Berlin Academy Exhibition in 1812 it must still have been considered rather ambiguous. A critic of the exhibition complained: "The artist's idea reaches the soul of the beholder both confusedly and clearly."[16] The paradox of this painting arose from the inscriptions on the tombs depicted, which were dedicated to the "Saviour of the Fatherland" or he who had "Fallen for Freedom and Justice".[17] But it was unclear whether these inscriptions were intended to honour those who by 1812 had already fallen, or whether they were an imagined future tribute to those for whom the painting was intended as a call to arms. Andreas Aubert, who first studied Friedrich's "patriotic pictures" in 1911, suggested that the "hieroglyphic" ambiguity of these works was due to a "fear of censorship".[18]

By 1813, the resistance to Napoleon had reached the Körner household. The poet Theodor Körner (Christian Gottfried Körner's son) joined the Lützowsche Freikorps, a mounted free corps, and the painter Georg Friedrich Kersting, Friedrich's friend and painter of the studio portraits (figs. 3, 4, p. 329), decided to follow his example. Conventional wisdom[19] has it that Friedrich financed Kersting's personal equipment, but this is based purely on a supposition expressed by Körner's father.[20] Although Friedrich was a supporter of the Wars of Liberation, he nevertheless fled from Dresden to the remote village of Krippen, fearing the fighting, the quartering of soldiers and the threat of food shortages.[21] After an initial period of being unable to work, he produced many drawings on his wanderings, most of all of trees. One drawing in particular (fig. 10, p. 79) stands out. Above a row of open spruces, Friedrich wrote the following: "Arm yourselves / today for the new battle German men / hail your weapons!"

After the victory over Napoleon in 1814, the general mood was one of patriotic euphoria, so that for once the annual Academy Exhibition was dedicated to the Russian tsar rather than the Saxon king. Works by Ferdinand Hartmann, Gerhard von Kügelgen and Caspar David Friedrich were on display, which the author of an exhibition review in the *Beiträgen zur Belehrung und Unterhaltung* described as "patriotic works of art".[22]

In that year, there was a notable increase in monument designs in Friedrich's oeuvre, such as one in honour of the since-fallen Theodor Körner.[23] Some of these were war memorials,[24] as for example a design that Friedrich sent to Ernst Moritz Arndt on 12 March 1814.[25] In the accompanying letter, Friedrich explicitly took a stand: "It does not surprise me at all that no monuments are being erected, neither those which symbolise the great cause of the people, nor the noble deeds of individual German men. As long as we remain the serfs of princes, nothing great of this kind will ever happen. Where the people have no voice, they are also not allowed to have any sense of themselves or to honour themselves."[26] After being found in the possession of Ernst Moritz Arndt five years later, in 1819, this letter became a damning piece of evidence leading to political reprisals for Friedrich's friends.[27]

RESTORATION

In the years that followed, the patriotic enthusiasm sparked by the Wars of Liberation began to wane. Liberal aspirations were frustrated by the policies of the Restoration, as defined by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In contemporary parlance, anyone who continued to advocate liberty was branded a 'demagogue' and risked political persecution in a crackdown against dissenters known in German as the *Demagogenverfolgung*.[28] This was reflected in the Carlsbad Resolutions of 1819, which aimed to restore feudal political structures. Friedrich's distrust of hierarchical social structures must be understood in the context of this political climate; in a letter to his brother in 1817 he remarked: "There is no authority I trust" (*[D]enn ich traue keiner Obrigkeit übern Weg*).[29] Writing in a letter to the Stralsund City Council regarding his designs for an altarpiece in 1818, he expressed his vision of the church as a political utopia of social equality. For him, the church was a "building where people gather to humble themselves before God, before whom one man is as good as another, where all distinctions of class should justly cease. In this place, at least, the rich must feel that they are no better than the poor, and (there) the poor must have a visible consolation: that we are all equal before God."[30] It was around this time that wanderers wearing *Altdeutsche Tracht* ('old German costume') started appearing in the artist's work. After the Wars of Liberation, this costume, based on what was known of the fashions of Dürer's time, was prized as being something uniquely German – and, by extension, distinctly anti-French. As early as 1814, Friedrich's friend Ernst Moritz Arndt published a work describing and advocating a 'German national costume' (*deutsche Kleidertracht*) – at a time when 'Germany' as a single political entity was still a radical, anti-monarchist idea.[31] The subject of a 'national' folk costume (as opposed to the various regional largely peasant costumes) continued to be debated in the following years,[32] but by 1815 it had largely disappeared from public discourse, as a nation-state determined by bourgeois interests was at odds with the Restoration of the dynastic order decreed by the Congress of Vienna.[33] In student circles, however, the German folk costume continued to be worn as an expression of liberal values, and was particularly conspicuous at the Wartburg Festival in 1817. Friedrich started clothing his figures in this kind of costume[34] (which contemporary viewers would have picked up on) at a time when it was considered an 'affront to the politics of the Restoration' and a marker of opposition.[35]

It is therefore conspicuous that in 1817, when Friedrich first exhibited a painting of two men in *Altdeutsche Tracht* at the Dresden Academy Exhibition,[36] contemporary reviews made no mention of the figures' attire.[37] This reticence on the part of the media may have been an early indication of what would become reality in 1819, when the Carlsbad Resolutions imposed a general ban on the wearing of *Altdeutsche Tracht*. Friedrich continued to depict the protagonists of his paintings in this type of costume, but henceforth refrained from submitting a painting such as *Two Men Contemplating the Moon* (fig. 3) to the Academy Exhibition. Half in jest while keeping a cautious distance, he summed up the apparent political views of the two moon-gazers on their nocturnal excursion, as manifested by their clothing, in a remark passed on by Carl Förster: "They are engaged in demagogic mischief" (*Die machen demagogische Umtriebe*).[38] One reviewer's comment on another painting in 1822 reveals how controversial it was for the contemporary public to see a painting showing "friends lost in contemplation," "recognisable by their cloaks and *fouragier* berets" and who "often haunt the artist's studio and sneak into his pictures".[39] The reviewer goes on to point out the "caution with which they always show themselves to the public only from behind."[40] Friedrich had every reason to be cautious. On 11 July 1819, as part of the *Demagogenverfolgung* in Berlin, the Prussian authorities searched the home of the political publisher Georg Andreas Reimer, a friend of Friedrich since their days in Greifswald, "on grounds of revolutionary mischief".[41] Among the things that the authorities confiscated were letters from Friedrich. Reimer had recently re-established contact with the painter and visited him in Dresden in September 1818, together with Friedrich Schleiermacher and Leopold von Plehwe. The latter had attended the Wartburg meeting in 1817 and was subsequently arrested and interrogated.[42] Three days after the events in Berlin, on 14 July 1819, Ernst Moritz Arndt's lodgings in Bonn were also searched for incriminating writings and his correspondence was confiscated by the sack-load,[43] including Friedrich's letter on his design for a monument to the heroes of the 1814 Wars of Liberation. The extent of this political surveillance and persecution is reflected by the fact that even Friedrich's friend the history professor Karl Schildener in Greifswald was interrogated and threatened with dismissal.[44] These events may also explain a small painting by Friedrich, which was

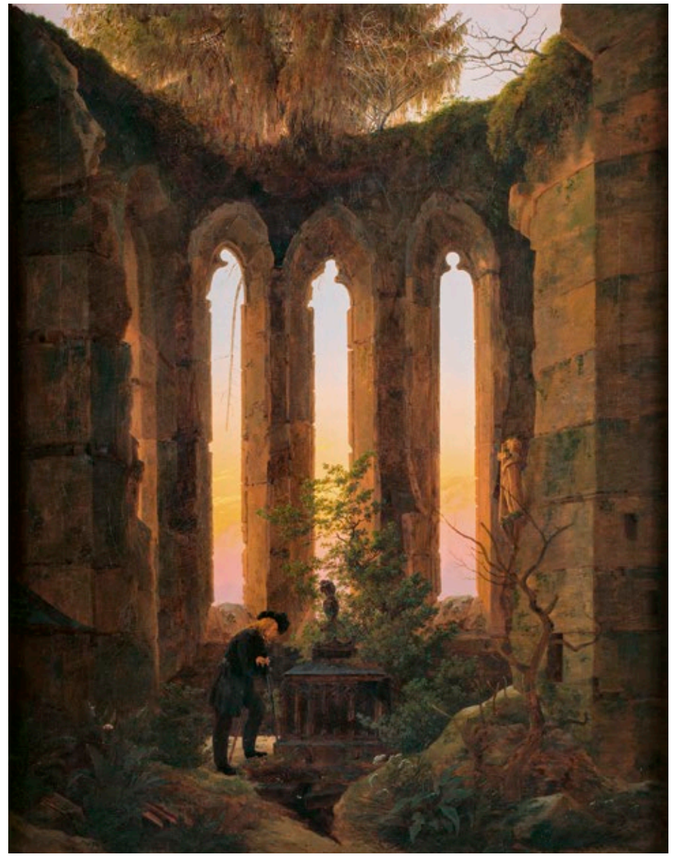
3 Caspar David Friedrich
Two Men Contemplating the Moon
1819/1820 | CAT 148

in Reimer's possession under the title *A Prison* (fig. 4). It illustrates Friedrich's concerns[45] and also refers to the events of 1823.

The fact that the anniversary of the Wars of Liberation in 1823 coincided with the 300th anniversary of the death of Ulrich von Hutten had a special significance for Friedrich's painting *Hutten's Grave* (fig. 5). In 1821, Reimer started publishing a multi-volume complete edition of Hutten's writings,[46] which led to conflicts with the censors and therefore ended with the fifth volume in 1825.[47] Among those who had preordered this edition were Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, Ernst Moritz Arndt, Baron Karl vom Stein and Joseph von Görres, whose names Friedrich inscribed in a small space on the front of the sarcophagus in this painting, next to that of Gerhard von Scharnhorst, who had died in 1813.[48] The name "Hutten" is written in capital letters on the base below the helmet. Friedrich thus drew a direct line from the campaign for freedom in 1813 and its tenth anniversary in 1823 to the Reformation in the 16th century. The monument serves as a political statement by the artist and reflects his interpretation of history. He chose the apse of the church ruins at Oybin as the setting for the tomb, which he had sketched on his journey to the Riesengebirge in 1810 (fig. 27, p. 145) and which was a popular site for national celebrations, such as the 300th anniversary of the Reformation in 1817.[49] When the painting was acquired by the Weimar court, it may have been because it reminded Duke Carl August of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach of a visit to Oybin in 1790. Christian August Pescheck had dedicated his book on Oybin, that "sanctuary of grey prehistory", to the duke in 1792.[50] The inclusion of von Scharnhorst's name suggests that Friedrich envisaged his painting as a memorial to the Wars of Liberation of 1813. Friedrich's design for a monument in 1814 was also to be dedicated to von Scharnhorst, but it was never built and its place was, in a sense, taken by a painted monument instead. Friedrich emphasised this connection when he exhibited the painting at the Berlin Art Exhibition of 1826, stating that the proceeds from its sale were "intended for the needy among the Greeks,"[51] referring to the Greek War of Independence. Friedrich was probably inspired by a benefit concert held in Reimer's garden as well as an exhibition "for the benefit of the Greeks", that had attracted public attention in Berlin.[52] Greece's struggle against Ottoman rule resonated with advocates of other political causes closer to home, such as preserving the memory and fervour of the Wars of Liberation and the fight for civil freedoms during the Restoration.

With regard to their political and social themes, Friedrich's landscape paintings transcend the genre, bringing them closer to themes usually found in history painting. This is particularly true for his painting *Dolmen in Autumn* (fig. 1, p. 317), his reception piece[53] to the Dresden Academy, which he was supposed to have submitted upon becoming a member in 1816, but which he only eventually presented to the Academy in the early 1820s. The special importance he attached to this painting can be seen in the amount of time he presumably spent on it, but also by the fact that he presented a landscape as a history painting, thus elevating it in the hierarchy of genres. This must have been particularly

4 Caspar David Friedrich
Gateway in Meissen
1827 | CAT 176



5 Caspar David Friedrich
Hutten's Grave
1823/1824 | CAT 157

Maria Körber

“HEAD AND HEART AND HAND”

TECHNICAL FINDINGS IN THE CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH PAINTINGS AT THE ALBERTINUM IN DRESDEN

“Felicity [of style] is managing to unite head and heart and hand.”[1] With these words, Caspar David Friedrich described an artist’s ideal. The triumvirate of skills embodied by “head”, “heart” and “hand” also seems key to his own art. These sentiments are echoed in reworded form in numerous other passages in Friedrich’s writings, confirming the thrust of the quotation. Friedrich accorded the greatest importance to the “heart”, which he took to also stand for “sensation”, “feeling” and “soul”.[2] He prioritised the individual creative force of an artist when he wrote: “A picture must not be invented but felt.”[3] The “head” is where Friedrich located “design” and “composition” and thus the understanding of the effects of aesthetic principles, which he saw as “clear-cut crutches”[4] that served a necessary auxiliary function. Among these “crutches” were, for example, the use of linear and aerial perspective, colour contrasts or those rules of composition derived from branches of mathematics such as geometry and proportion. The two spheres of “heart” and “head” have been examined in detail in the literature on Friedrich’s work. By contrast, comparatively little research has thus far been devoted to the “hand”, which Friedrich associated with “dexterity”, “brushwork” (*Pinselfertigkeit*) and “craftsmanship” (*Handwerk*).[5] To close this gap, the following questions need to be answered by examining the originals:[6] Which supports did Friedrich use and how were they prepared? What kind of underdrawings did he use? What tools and technical aids were used and can any traces of them be found in the paintings? Which colourants were on Friedrich’s palette and how was the paint applied (fig. 1)?

25 | Detail

1 Caspar David Friedrich
The Cross in the Mountains | 1807/1808
Detail from fig. 1, p. 239
Crucifix with coloured highlights on thin brown underpainting. Traces of underdrawing visible in places.

2 Unknown artist
(attr. Caspar David Friedrich until 2024)
Landscape with a Bare Tree | hitherto dated 1798/1799
Oil on canvas, 36.5 × 43.5 cm
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Albertinum, Gal.-Nr. 83/01
Recent scientific analyses have disproved the attribution to Friedrich.

THE DRESDEN HOLDINGS

With thirteen[7] paintings by Caspar David Friedrich, the collection of the Albertinum in Dresden contains a representative cross-section of the artist's painterly oeuvre, which was created between 1807 and 1835. Among these holdings are key works from all phases of Friedrich's career, which provided the best starting point for continuing where Kristina Mösl left off with her technical investigation of the Friedrich collection at Berlin's Alte Nationalgalerie.[8] Her extensive interdisciplinary analysis campaign served as a template that makes the individual findings available for further comparative scientific analyses.[9] In addition to an in-depth visual examination of the paintings, including under a stereo microscope, various other non-invasive imaging methods were used. For instance, X-radiography made it possible to determine the different supports as well as the successive layers of ground and paint. Infrared reflectography was used to reveal Friedrich's detailed underdrawings as well as pentimenti made by the artist during the painting phase. Ultraviolet fluorescence provided crucial information about the state and composition of the varnish layers. To identify Friedrich's pigments, the localised X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis was supplemented by analytical examinations of minuscule paint-layer samples taken from the far edges of the paintings.[10]

The results of the scientific analyses are of particular importance in the case of the Dresden painting *Landscape with a Bare Tree* (fig. 2), which was thought to be a very early oil painting by Friedrich, made around 1798 while he was still a student. Doubts about the painting's autograph status had been raised on stylistic grounds and were further fuelled by the analysis of the infrared reflectogram, as the crude, ill-considered lines of the pencil underdrawing could not be reconciled with Friedrich's drawings from around 1798. Finally, pigment analysis revealed the presence of chrome yellow and cobalt blue, two pigments that did not appear in easel painting until 1810.[11] This invalidates the identification of the *Landscape with a Bare Tree* as an early work by Caspar David Friedrich.

STATES OF PRESERVATION

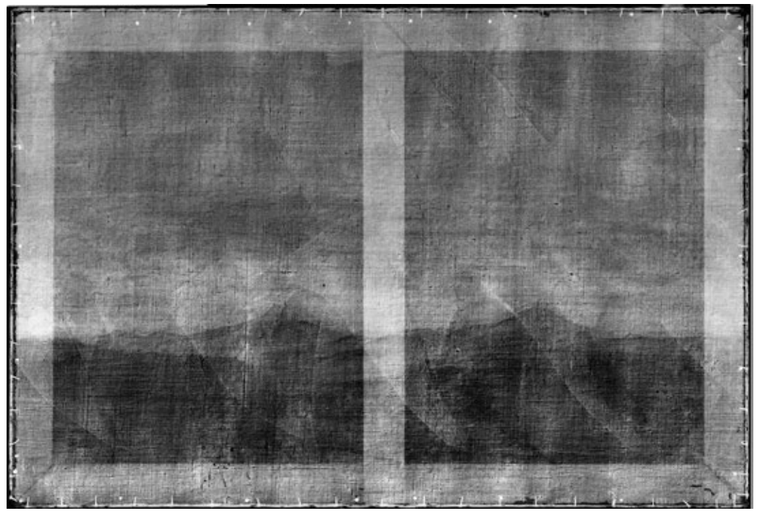
The technical analyses are greatly facilitated by the good to very good condition of the Dresden paintings. Four of the thirteen works have never been relined – the original canvases are structurally sound and did not require the attachment of a new canvas to the back of the existing one for reinforcement. One of the four, *The Cross in the Mountains* (or *Tetschen Altarpiece*) (fig. 1, p. 239), has only been taken off its original stretcher once, in 1965, while only the corners of *The Large Enclosure near Dresden* (*Das Grosse Gehege*) (fig. 13, p. 274) have ever come off the original stretcher for retensioning.[12] While it is imperative to preserve these rare authentic conditions for as long as possible, they do mean that the works of art are particularly fragile. As there is only very limited retouching in most of the paintings examined here, the quality of Friedrich's handling of the paint is still readily apparent. It is evident from his letters that Caspar David Friedrich coated recently completed oil paintings with a temporary egg-white film before presenting them to the public, leaving it to the buyer to deal with washing it off and getting the painting properly varnished with a mastic resin solution within the space of a year.[13] To date, analysis of paint-sample cross-sections has revealed evidence of an egg-white coating only for the painting *View over the Elbe Valley* (fig. 24, p. 143).

3 Caspar David Friedrich
The Cross in the Mountains | 1807/1808
Back of painting with its original stretcher frame.

STRETCHER AND CANVAS WEAVE

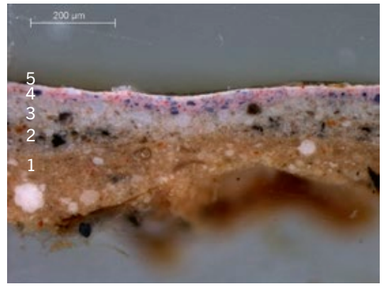
Five original stretcher frames of the Dresden paintings have a blind mortise-and-tenon joint at the corners, which allows for independent expansion in height and width. This type of stretcher, made of softwood and often fitted with hardwood wedges, is the most common in Friedrich's oeuvre. Two other stretchers, probably also dating from the period in which the paintings were completed, have a bevelled edge on the canvas side. There can be little doubt that the expandable stretcher with a central cross brace over which the canvas for *The Cross in the Mountains* was stretched before Friedrich set to work on the painting was custom-made to the artist's exacting specifications (fig. 3).[14]

Friedrich favoured a single strip of canvas as the support for his oil paintings, no matter what their dimensions. This means that even in comparatively large formats such as that of *The Cemetery* (fig. 8, p. 224) there are no seams.[15] Made from locally grown flax,[16] the canvases were woven on handlooms in a simple plain weave. In his late work, Friedrich tended to prefer finer, more densely woven canvases than at the start of his career.[17] Today, with the help of technical analyses, these fabrics can be classified more precisely. Special software is capable of producing thread count maps on the basis of scanned X-rays to identify pieces of canvas cut from the same roll or bolt.[18] To date, the Dresden investigations have brought to light four such 'weave matches', which are not only of technical interest but may also help in dating the works and identifying the authorial intent behind thematically linked works long since separated from each other.[19] The supports of the Dresden painting *Two Men Contemplating the Moon* (fig. 3, p. 252) and the Berlin variant *Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon* very probably come from the same roll of canvas.[20] Dresden's *Ships in Harbour in the Evening* and Berlin's *Coast in the Moonlight* at the Alte Nationalgalerie also form a match. There is also a triple match between the paintings *Bohemian Landscape with Mount Milleschauer* and the *Bohemian Landscape* from the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (BS/J 189), which are regarded as pendants, and the painting *Bohemian Landscape with a Lake* from Weimar, which is identical in format (fig. 1, p. 175). However, as the small Dresden painting *Trees and Bushes in the Snow* (fig. 3, p. 259) and its pendant in Munich, *Spruce*



4 Caspar David Friedrich
Bohemian Landscape with Mount Milleschauer | 1808
See fig. 2, p. 268
X-radiograph revealing undulating strokes left by priming knife in ground layer containing lead white.

5 Caspar David Friedrich
View over the Elbe Valley | 1808
Detail of fig. 24, p. 143
Foreground with visible vertical scratch in ground layer.



6 Caspar David Friedrich
The Cross in the Mountains | 1807/1808
Cross-section (12948) of sample taken from left-hand edge of sky.
Layers 1, 2: Ochre-coloured ground
Layer 3: Patchy white ground
Layer 4: Thin layer of violet containing splinters of blue smalt and particles of red cinnabar
Layer 5: Very thin layer of pale-yellow paint.

Thicket in the Snow (BS/J 360) illustrate, it is by no means a given that Friedrich invariably painted his pendants on canvases from the same roll.

GROUND

All of Friedrich's paintings on canvas are executed in numerous layers applied over a ground whose colour, texture, and absorbency have a direct influence on the application of the paint layers and, with it, on the visual effect of the work. There has been much debate and a great deal of contradictory information about the question as to whether Friedrich prepared his canvases himself. The evidence gathered thus far shows that, like many of his contemporaries, he used commercially primed canvas, cut to size from long lengths of cloth. At the beginning of the 19th century, there were several suppliers in Dresden, some of them known to us by name, who sold primed fabric supports in various colours.[21] The grounds of the Dresden paintings consist of two to four thin layers. While the lower layers were evidently applied with large palette knives, so-called priming knives, which left undulating marks that can be seen in the X-ray image (fig. 4), brushes were used for the top layer. The characteristic striations often left by the bristles still

7 Caspar David Friedrich
Two Men Contemplating the Moon | 1819/1820
Detail of fig. 3, p. 252
Sky with stippling, pencil underdrawing visible in moon.

8 Caspar David Friedrich
Dolmen in the Snow | 1807
Detail of fig. 1, p. 249
Left: left-hand oak tree. Right: same detail superimposed with enlarged and darkened outlines from sketch from Karlsruhe Sketchbook of 1804 (nos. 8, 9, p. 11)

shine through the thin upper paint layers and are visible to the naked eye (fig. 21). Friedrich was obviously not bothered by these delicate textures and also overlooked the occasional deeper scratch mark (fig. 5).[22]

Most buyers were probably completely unaware of the two-colour structure of most of the grounds revealed by analysis of the cross-sections (fig. 6). Presumably for economic reasons, the manufacturers mixed inexpensive ochre, burnt red earth, chalk and barium sulphate into the lower primer layers, which only served to smooth and even out the weave texture. The upper visible layers of primer are dominated by a high proportion of expensive lead white, presumably primarily bound in oil. Friedrich painted most of his pictures on a patchy whitish ground, which set the tone for his thinly applied colours. The fact that Friedrich chose the tonality of his grounds to suit the subject or motif of the planned painting is demonstrated by the example of *Two Men Contemplating the Moon*.[23] Here the reddish ochre tone of the uppermost layer of the ground serves not only as the mid-tone of the near-monochromatic palette of this late evening mood, but it also remains visible beneath the loosely applied paint of the finished work.[24]

COMPOSITION, PREPARATORY DRAWING, TRANSFER

Without exception, Caspar David Friedrich's works in oil were painted in his sparsely furnished and functional studio, of which we have a fairly accurate idea thanks to the "studio scenes" by his friend Kersting (fig. 1, p. 327). The fact that no compositional sketches or cartoons have come down to us seems to lend credibility to Carl Gustav Carus's posthumous description of Friedrich's compositional process: "He never made sketches, cartoons, or colour studies for his paintings, because he claimed […] that such aids tended to cool the imagination. He never went to work on a painting until it stood lifelike before him in his mind's eye […]."[25] In contrast to his approach to the overall composition, which, he thought, should ideally spring from the artist's creative imagination as the "free, mental re-creation of nature",[26] Friedrich attached great importance to the precise rendering of details and to the close study of nature – true to his maxim "[…] study nature after nature and not after paintings."[27] Some 1000 drawings, most of them made outdoors, bear eloquent testimony to Friedrich's talent as a draughtsman. They capture not only slices of landscapes but also portray individual stones, roots or branches with great precision. As has often been pointed out, the fact that Friedrich used these studies of nature as props and moveable set-pieces shows that he conceived of the specifics of the natural world as a manifestation of God's creation and thus as core building blocks or even binding truths for the artist to heed. In this approach, he followed Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes's widely circulated artists' manual,[28] published in a German translation in 1803, which emphasised the importance of close observation: "Notice all the little things about the bark, the moss, the roots, the sweep of the branches […]."[29] "One has to follow nature in studies of this kind and search for truths […]."[30] On the other hand, Valenciennes gives a detailed example to describe this kind of 'cut-and-paste technique': "The imagination now places the pleasant fountain together with its surroundings under this second view. The artist reaches for his drawing pencil, draws both together, and thus unites two beautiful objects in a single painting that will be much more accomplished than if he had depicted them separately."[31]

It remains a mystery how Friedrich actually accomplished this cut-and-paste montage,

Werner Busch

GEORG FRIEDRICH KERSTING (1785–1847)

Georg Friedrich Kersting produced a total of three paintings of Caspar David Friedrich at his easel in his studio.[1] Despite their age difference of more than ten years, the two artists were close, and Friedrich may well have advised his younger friend in matters of his artistic training. Friedrich had studied at the Academy in Copenhagen from 1794 to 1798. Kersting was enrolled in Copenhagen from 1805 to 1808. When he subsequently came to Dresden on his planned travels to Italy, it was apparently Friedrich who persuaded him to stay and recommended that he enrol at the Dresden Academy. In July 1810, the two artists went on a walking tour of the Riesengebirge (Giant Mountains) together.[2] Not long after their return, Kersting embarked on the first of his three paintings of Friedrich in the studio (fig. 1).

The finished painting, dated 1811, was first exhibited that year at the Dresden Academy alongside a canvas of the same size and date showing the painter Gerhard von Kügelgen, also at work in his studio (fig. 2).[3] Despite the comparable subject and interior setting, the paintings are fundamentally different in tone. We can safely say that they and subsequent works in the same vein should be read as programmatic. Friedrich's bare studio is juxtaposed with Gerhard von Kügelgen's cluttered space. Both artists are shown at work in a room with two tall windows, one of which is completely darkened, while the other has wooden shutters that cover the lower part. As recommended in contemporary treatises,[4] this arrangement was said to create the best possible lighting for painters. If at all possible, the windows should be north-facing, so that the canvas would be lit by diffuse, indirect light only, which should come in at an angle from above to avoid glare. Friedrich, who is shown working on a landscape with a waterfall, has furnished his studio with extreme restraint. A small table with a few painting utensils on it is complemented by an arrangement of two palettes, a set square, a T-square and a ruler hanging on the wall and the boarded-up window in so conspicuous a manner that one wonders whether these tools were really hanging there or

1 Georg Friedrich Kersting
Caspar David Friedrich in His Studio
1811 | CAT 272

2 Georg Friedrich Kersting
Gerhard von Kügelgen in His Studio | 1811
Oil on canvas, 53.3 × 42 cm
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, inv. 2329

3 Georg Friedrich Kersting
Caspar David Friedrich in His Studio (Berlin painting) | c. 1812
Oil on canvas, 51 × 40 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, National-galerie, ident. A I 931

4 Georg Friedrich Kersting
Caspar David Friedrich in His Studio
1814 – 1819 | CAT 273

whether their self-conscious display served an ulterior, programmatic purpose.

The furnishings of von Kügelgen's studio are distinctly more opulent. Several portraits can be seen either hanging from or leaning against the side wall behind the artist at his easel. They allude to von Kügelgen's main activity as a portraitist, although the artist never renounced the highest academic genre of history painting. A shelf on the opposite wall holds plaster casts of antiquities; piles of books on a table underscore his standing as *pictor doctus*. Mounted on the wall between the two windows directly behind him are two guns, with a lyre on the floor below. They stand for the occasional diversions recommended to the painter, for leisure and musical inspiration.[5] Von Kügelgen's painting utensils, above all pigment bottles – and possibly a wine decanter – are more plentiful than Friedrich's, but there are no measuring tools in sight. In Kersting's painting of Friedrich in his studio, their special importance to the artist is underlined by the fact that the point at which the brush protrudes from his right hand is where the maulstick and the T-square intersect, as if the accuracy of the depiction emanated from there.

The following year, in 1812, Kersting painted a variant of the first picture with an even more pronounced programmatic agenda (fig. 3). Once again, the painting was accompanied by a pendant, this time in form of a similarly staged portrait of the history painter Friedrich Matthäi.[6] A huge blank canvas is set up on the right in front of the darkened window; the artist evidently has grand ambitions. Here, too, we see a table with painting utensils; large folios lie on the floor. The painter asserts his claim to the entire tradition of painting in both theory and practice. Further to two plaster busts framing the upper reaches of the window, there is an ensemble of plaster figurines on a tripod stand, clearly arranged to form the scene of the Last Supper. Ever since Leonardo da Vinci at the latest, the disciples have been cast as representatives of different character traits, each with its own distinctive physiognomy. The disciples react to Christ's announcement that one of them is going to betray him with expressions that correspond to their character. No wonder that the heads from da Vinci's *Last Supper*, reproduced separately, served as inspiration for generations of artists.[7]

In Kersting's second studio portrait of him, Friedrich, on the other hand, stands leaning against the tall backrest of a chair, palette, brush and maulstick in hand, gazing at a large landscape-format canvas, of which we only see the back. The arrangement of palettes, set square and ruler on the wall is the same as in the first picture. If we look very closely, we can spot a small well-thumbed booklet on the sill of the darkened window. The deeper meaning of this painting is revealed when we recognise its reliance on the golden ratio; Friedrich evidently familiarised Kersting with one of his fundamental compositional principles – their walking trip would have given him ample opportunity to do so. The left vertical runs exactly through the point where the brush protrudes from Friedrich's hand. This could still be a coincidence if the lower horizontal line of the golden ratio did not pass through this point and the small booklet. We

should interpret it as one of Friedrich's sketchbooks, in which he was collecting material for his works. The upper horizontal line runs through the nails from which the set square and the ruler are suspended, which is unlikely to be a coincidence.

One possible interpretation would therefore be: Friedrich is standing in front of the easel, waiting for the moment of inspiration. The execution will draw on his close observations of nature recorded in the sketchbook. However, he must first establish the compositional structure of his canvas, into which the individual elements will then be inserted. By choosing to apply the principle of the golden ratio, he invests the painting with a deeper meaning and taps into the divine order. With good reason, ever since the 16th century the golden ratio has been referred to by some as the "divine proportion".[8] The compositional structure is set out with the help of the measuring instruments hanging on the wall. Kersting is likely to have been able to familiarise himself with Friedrich's methods by studying his highly finished sepia drawings of windows of 1805/1806,[9] in which keys and scissors hanging from nails on the wall mark the lines of the golden ratio with millimetre precision. Finally, the canvas on the easel is probably Friedrich's *Morning in the Giant Mountains*.[10] The fruit of the walking tour through the Bohemian mountains he had undertaken with Kersting, that painting was completed in 1811. Kersting was even thought by one critic to have contributed the tiny figures on the summit.[11]

Painted a few years later, Kersting's third studio portrait of Friedrich (fig. 4) is broadly similar to the first, albeit with clear differences in the temperature of the light and the picture on the easel. While the work from 1811 shows the studio flooded with bright daylight and the artist working on a landscape with a waterfall, the view through the window in the last of the three studio paintings shows signs of dusk, while the canvas on the easel is still completely blank. It remains unclear what prompted Kersting to paint his series of artists in their studios. Were they painted on commission, or should we read them as tributes to his colleagues and their different personalities?

1 See Schnell 1994, pp. 24 – 32, 41 – 47, 156 – 158, cat. A. 27, A 48, A 72.
2 For works produced during this walking tour, see essay by Dirk Gedlich in this volume, pp. 168 – 173.
3 See Schnell 1994, cat. A 28.
4 See Bouvier 1828, p. 344.
5 Recommended, for example, in Van Mander 1604, fol. 34.
6 See Schnell 1994, cat. 149.
7 Goethe, for example, acquired the prints after the heads of the *Last Supper* published by Giuseppe Bossi in 1808, see exh. cat. Frankfurt 1994, cats. 30 – 37, pp. 73 – 76.
8 See Busch 2003, pp. 101 – 122; Busch 2021, pp. 2 – 42.
9 See Busch 2003, pp. 11 – 21, 26 – 33.
10 Caspar David Friedrich, *Morning in the Giant Mountains*, 1810, oil on canvas, 108 × 170 cm, Berlin, Neuer Pavillon, Schlosspark Charlottenburg, inv. GK I 6911.
11 BS/J 190. The reviewer of the painting asserts that Kersting had painted the figures, in Anonymous 1811, pp. 371 – 373.

Linda Alpermann

CAROLINE BARDUA (1781–1864)

In the winter of 1839, Caroline Bardua, the Ballenstedt-born painter of portraits and historical scenes, captured a visibly aged Caspar David Friedrich in her portrait of the artist (fig. 1). It shows the artist slumped in a chair, his gaze averted from the viewer while staring into the distance. The background is dominated by a window overlooking a bridge over the Elbe, framed by willow branches. Friedrich is depicted wearing a fur-trimmed coat over a white shirt. Behind him is an empty canvas, and in front of him are an unused palette and cleaned brushes. The blank canvas and untouched painting utensils may indicate his creative inertia, while the painter himself looks weak and tired.[1] The portrait was painted a few months before his death. Bardua had visited Friedrich in August 1839 after a long absence from Dresden. Four years earlier, the artist had suffered a severe stroke and must have appeared gravely ill during her visit. In a letter, Caroline Bardua's sister, Wilhelmine, wrote: "Caroline found her old friend Caspar Friedrich completely broken and ill. She now calls on him every morning to paint him."[2] The painting was exhibited at the Berlin Art Academy in the autumn of 1840 and because Friedrich had died in May of that year, it attracted a great deal of interest.[3]

It is worth comparing this picture with Bardua's first portrait of Friedrich of 1810 (fig. 2).[4] That painting shows the still sprightly 36-year-old painter at half-length, in front of a seascape with chalk cliffs in the distance. Friedrich faces the viewer in three-quarter profile. He looks serious and attentive and is dressed in a dark overcoat with a high collar that sets off his striking reddish-blonde muttonchops and accentuates his pale face, which catches the light. The stark contrast of light and dark between Friedrich's face and the rest of the picture, as well as the Neoclassical composition, give Friedrich an almost heroic quality. His half-turn towards a seascape, presumably the Baltic, refers to his birthplace and his closeness to nature.[5] Friedrich wears a black armband on his left arm in memory of his father, who had died the year before. A comparison of the 1810 and 1839 portraits reveals not only the artist's worn appearance, marked by age and illness in the later portrait, but also the change in Bardua's approach to composition and style over the intervening three decades. The heroicising,

1 Caroline Bardua
Portrait of the Painter Caspar David Friedrich
1839 | CAT 209

2 Caroline Bardua
Portrait of the Painter Caspar David Friedrich | 1810
Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 60 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie,
Ident. A I 1127

classical composition, with all the energy and idealism of early Romanticism (fig. 2), has given way to a softer portrait of Friedrich (fig. 1) that foreshadows Romanticism's transition into the Realism of the mid-century.[6]

Caroline Bardua became acquainted with Friedrich through the portrait and history painter Gerhard von Kügelgen, with whom she stayed from 1808 to 1810 and studied portrait painting.[7] She had previously trained with Heinrich Meyer in Weimar from 1805 to 1807.[8] There she met Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and became part of the circle of friends around the writer Johanna Schopenhauer.[9] Meyer, then director of the Fürstliche freie Zeichenschule Weimar (Princely Free Drawing School), had advised her to go to Dresden, and Goethe himself had written a letter of recommendation for her to study privately with von Kügelgen.[10] Once there, Bardua had the opportunity to study and copy the Old Masters at the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, where she made friends with other talented artists such as Louise Seidler and Therese aus dem Winckel.[11] Caspar David Friedrich was a frequent guest at the von Kügelgen household, which was a meeting place for many prominent intellectuals and cultural figures. It was here that Friedrich made friends with some of the students of his good friend Gerhard von Kügelgen, including Bardua and Seidler. Through her teacher, Bardua came into contact with Anton Graff, who became one of her greatest role models as a portrait painter.[12] When she exhibited the earlier portrait of Friedrich at the Dresden Academy exhibition in 1810, it was met with acclaim, both for its technical execution and for the way it captured Friedrich's personality.[13] Bardua's portraits were characterised by a deliberate individualisation of the sitter's personality, probably due to the influence of Anton Graff.[14] After the Academy exhibition in 1810, the artist returned to Ballenstedt, where she soon met Friedrich again. In 1811, when he and his friend Christian Gottlob Kühn set out on their walking tour of the Harz Mountains, they visited the Bardua family for a few days in Ballenstedt. Wilhelmine Bardua vividly remembered this visit: "On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, while Caroline was sitting at the piano […] two strangers appeared in our street. They were the landscape painter Friedrich and the sculptor Kühn, who had come from Dresden on a tour of the Harz Mountains and wanted to spend a day or two in Ballenstedt. They came to see Caroline at once, and the company of both artists was most agreeable to her."[15] The visit to Ballenstedt and the two portraits of Friedrich mentioned above indicate the mutual respect and ease that existed between Bardua and Friedrich.

Bardua first took singing, piano, guitar and drawing lessons in Ballenstedt. She then attended the Weimar Princely Free Drawing School, followed by a stay with Gerhard von Kügelgen in Dresden. When her father died in 1818, Caroline Bardua assumed full financial responsibility for her mother, sister and younger brother. In addition to Weimar and Dresden, painting commissions took her to Halberstadt, Halle, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Berlin and Heidelberg.[16] A stay in Paris followed in 1829, where Bardua studied and copied works in the Louvre, with a subsequent three-year spell in Frankfurt am Main.[17] In 1832 the sisters Caroline and Wilhelmine Bardua returned to Berlin,[18] where in 1843, together with Gisela, Maximiliane and Armgart von Arnim, as well as Marie Lichtenstein and Ottilie von Graefe, they founded the literary and artistic Salon *Kaffeter*, a club for women only,[19] dedicated to "the entertainment and promotion of the artistic and musical talents of women."[20] From 1852, the Bardua sisters spent their remaining years in their birthplace of Ballenstedt at the court of Friederike and Alexander Carl, the Duke and Duchess of Anhalt-Bernburg.[21] Here, too, Bardua worked as a portrait painter. She died in June 1864 at the advanced age of 82. Bardua was one of the few women of her time to work as a freelance artist and earn a good living.

1 See Kovalevski 2008, pp. 44 f.
2 Werner 1929, p. 152.
3 See Dollinger 1993, p. 22.
4 The work has been in the collection of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin since 1911. See Verwiebe 2019, pp. 19 – 22. It was first shown at the Dresden Academy Exhibition in 1810. See Kovalevski 2008, pp. 16 f.; Verwiebe 2019, p. 19.
5 See Kovalevski 2015, pp. 18 f.
6 See Kovalevski 2008, pp. 44 f., Kovalevski 2015, p. 37.
7 See Schwarz 1874, pp. 53 – 57.
8 See Kovalevski 2015, pp. 9 f.
9 See Dollinger 1993, pp. 12 f.
10 See Kovalevski 2015, pp. 10 f.
11 Of all the students taught by von Kügelgen, Caroline Bardua must have been particularly talented and popular, as von Kügelgen's son Wilhelm wrote: "In fact, Caroline had one of those natures that did not fit into any concept of class; she could not be measured by traditional standards. She was something for herself and something whole, that everyone came to respect", in Kügelgen 1971, p. 208. He went on to write: "[She] stood out […] most favourably from all the other pupils of my father, who had therefore taken a special interest in her and rejoiced in her successes as long as he lived", in ibid.
12 See Tanneberger 2012, pp. 28 f.
13 See ibid.
14 See exh. cat. Gotha-Konstanz 1999, p. 240, Tanneberger 2012, pp. 28 f., Kovalevski 2015, pp. 15 f.
15 Schwarz 1874, pp. 58 f. For more on Friedrich's and Kühn's Ballenstedt visit, see ibid. pp. 59 – 61; Werner 1929, pp. 33 f.
16 See Tanneberger 2012, pp. 32 – 35, Kovalevski 2015, pp. 21 – 33.
17 See ibid., p. 42, Dollinger 1993, pp. 21 f., Kovalevski 2015, pp. 34 f.
18 The first time Caroline was accompanied by her sister, who was sixteen years her junior, was during a stay in Coswig and Halle in 1815, after which it became customary for the two to travel together. See Kneffel 2011, p. 34. Wilhelmine 'Mine' Bardua, was a musician and writer. During the sisters' first stay in Berlin in 1819, she trained as a singer and was accepted into the Berlin Sing-Akademie the following year, see Werner 1929, pp. 66 – 67. Wilhelmine also wrote the biography *Jugendleben der Malerin Caroline Bardua*, published by Walter Schwarz after the sisters' deaths. It is an important source not only for the life and work of Caroline Bardua, but also for the social and cultural history of the life of a middle-class artist in the first half of the 19th century.
19 See Kovalevski 2015, p. 43 The Bardua sisters were very close, living and working together. Caroline and Wilhelmine Bardua were talented networkers, cultivating contacts with many artists and writers and successfully negotiating the academic circles of their respective fields. See Carius 2016, p. 97, Tanneberger 2012, pp. 35 f., pp. 41 f., Dollinger 1993, pp. 17 f.
20 Tanneberger 2012, p. 44.
21 See Dollinger 1993, pp. 32 – 34.

Klara von Lindern

HANS JOACHIM NEIDHARDT REBUILDS THE CANON, RENEWING INTEREST IN DRESDEN ROMANTICISM

Between 1972 and 1975, three major retrospectives were held in London, Hamburg and Dresden to mark the bicentenary of Caspar David Friedrich's birth, loosely coinciding with the anniversary year of 1974.[1] A closer look at the titles and concepts of the London and Dresden exhibitions reveals a thematic similarity: *Caspar David Friedrich 1774–1840: Romantic Landscape Painting in Dresden* and *Caspar David Friedrich und sein Kreis*. In addition to a largely chronological overview of the artist's entire oeuvre, both exhibitions featured a selection of works by many of Friedrich's fellow artists who were active at some point in Dresden. At the Tate Gallery, this included some thirteen paintings and drawings, while at the Albertinum in Dresden this part of the exhibition grew to a total of 35 works on canvas and paper.[2] As far as is known, no photographs have survived of the corresponding section of the London retrospective, but there are several photographs of the exhibition at the Albertinum in 1974–1975 which give a good overview of the works by Friedrich's Dresden-based circle of fellow artists exhibited in the Mosaiksaal[3] (fig. 1). These were major anniversary exhibitions with the aim of critically reassessing Friedrich's work and making it accessible to the public of the 1970s, while at the same time establishing Dresden as an important centre of Romantic landscape painting. By contrast, the present exhibition marking the 250th anniversary of Friedrich's birth has been greatly expanded to include a look at the influence of the Old Masters and numerous loans from German collections and abroad.

It is no coincidence that the London and Dresden retrospectives of the 1970s were thematically and conceptually related.[4] The chief curator of the Dresden exhibition, Hans Joachim Neidhardt, was also part of the London curatorial team and is represented in the catalogues of both exhibitions with essays: first in 1972 on the relationship between Ernst Ferdinand Oehme and Caspar David Friedrich[5] and then in an extended form on "Caspar David Friedrich's Influence on the Artists of His Time".[6] In addition to (co-)curating these groundbreaking retrospectives – which were to have a decisive impact on the history of Friedrich's reception – Hans Joachim Neidhardt can also be thanked for helping to put 'Dresden Romanticism' firmly on the map in scholarship on German art and cultural history. In his autobiography, published in 2020, Neidhardt considers

2 | Detail

1 Friedrich exhibition in the Albertinum 1974 – 1975, exhibition room/Mosaiksaal with works by Carl Gustav Carus, Ernst Ferdinand Oehme and Johan Christian Dahl

2 Friedrich exhibition in the Albertinum 1974 – 1975, exhibition room/Klingersaal

3 Friedrich exhibition in the Albertinum 1974 – 1975, exhibition room/Klingersaal

4 Friedrich Exhibition in the Albertinum 1974 – 1975, exhibition room/Mosaiksaal

the history of 19th century painting in Dresden to be the "general theme" of his life's work as a scholar, while lamenting the persistent "major gaps in knowledge"[7] in art scholarship, which he bemoans as often being outdated. In the course of his work as curator for 19th century painting at the Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister (now Albertinum), he approached this field of research from many different angles, for example by contextualising a number of Friedrich's contemporaries in the retrospectives of the 1970s. In 1976, almost two years after the Dresden anniversary exhibition, Hans Joachim Neidhardt published *Die Malerei der Romantik in Dresden* through the E. A. Seemann-Verlag in Leipzig, which can be seen as both a summary of his in-depth research and an interim result of his subsequent engagement with this chapter of art history, its main proponents and their works. As he himself recalls, the book was so popular that a second edition was printed shortly after the first, for export to West Germany and later further abroad.[8]

In *Die Malerei der Romantik in Dresden*, Hans Joachim Neidhardt takes a close look at the artists who lived, worked, taught and trained in the city, even if but briefly. The author positions Dresden as a hub of various artistic networks and, by doing so, was the first to highlight the city's central role in the artistic achievements of Romanticism besides art centres already long-associated with the Romantic movement (at least in the German-speaking cultural sphere), such as Rome and Vienna.[9] While the 35 works shown in the Friedrich retrospective in Dresden in 1974 – 1975 were exclusively landscapes by artists who were close to Caspar David Friedrich and Johan Christian Dahl, the range of artists and works discussed in *Die Malerei der Romantik in Dresden* is considerably broader. Nevertheless, the British and East-German exhibitions of the 1970s, especially the latter, can clearly be seen as laying the groundwork for the present volume, both in terms of content and on a historical and cultural-political level.

A brief excursion into the historical and cultural-political background of both exhibitions with Neidhardt's curatorial involvement and the publication of the East-German book shows that until the 1970s the reception of Romantic art and literature in the GDR was limited and considered undesirable by the socialist state. Existing scholarship[10] repeatedly cites the writings of the literary historian György Lukács as the basis for this critique, in particular his *Fortschritt und Reaktion in der deutschen Literatur*,[11] which, while written in the 1930s, was first published in 1947. In it, Lukács sets up a dichotomy between Romanticism and Neoclassicism, which he sees as opposing poles, with the former representing a "preponderance" of "reactionary elements"[12] and "a defence of the remnants of feudalism in Germany".[13] By doing so, Lukács placed Romanticism and its protagonists in a negative light in comparison to the thinkers and artists of the Enlightenment and Neoclassicism, which he saw as progressive intellectual movements. In the GDR (at least as far as the state apparatus was concerned) a highly selective cultural canon emerged, which until the early 1970s largely ignored the cultural legacy of German Romanticism in literature and art. This cultural aversion to Romanticism had much to do with the lasting intellectual reverberations of Lukács' thesis, but also with the most recent chapter in the reception history of Caspar David Friedrich during the Nazi period and the resulting ideological appropriation and distortion of his art by such authors as Kurt Karl Eberlein – proponents of exactly the kind of nationalistic German art history that the younger György Lukács had reacted against.[14] This was to change significantly as a result of foreign and domestic political developments: the signing of the Basic Treaty between the GDR and the Federal Republic (West Germany) in December 1972, which recognised the GDR as a sovereign state and acknowledged that there were two Germanies. Promptly following the treaty, the GDR was admitted to UNESCO and, in 1973, to the United Nations, and this official international recognition marked a sea-change in the GDR's political stance towards West Germany, pursued under the banner of the 'theory of divergence'.[15] Until then, the GDR's foreign cultural policy had played a central role in establishing diplomatic relations with capitalist countries abroad, the so-called *kapitalistisches Ausland*. Concerts, guest performances and, not least, exhibitions were seen as a form of seemingly friendly cultural export[16] in the context of which diplomatic issues could be negotiated.[17] The participation of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in the Friedrich retrospective in London with loans should be seen against this political backdrop, as surviving archive documents attest.[18] It should be borne in mind that, over and above official instructions, trips within the framework of such state-sponsored collaborations offered the delegates (in this case Hans Joachim Neidhardt) above all the opportunity to see and study works in cultural institutions that would otherwise have been inaccessible to East German citizens and to establish medium- and long-term contacts that could be subsequently maintained via correspondence.[19] West Germany's recognition of the GDR as a sovereign state was largely ideologically motivated and should be seen against the background of Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Neue Ostpolitik* and the strategy of "change through rapprochement".[20] The East-German response was a foreign policy characterised by increasing demarcation, implemented on the basis of the above-mentioned theory of 'divergence', with the view that: "in the more than 40 years of post-war history, two German national cultures had emerged and that it could therefore no longer be claimed that culture was the bond continuing to hold a single existing German nation together."[21] At the domestic level, this change of course led to calls for the creation or rather identification of a distinct socialist cultural heritage[22] – in retrospect certainly an "invented tradition", to use Hobsbawn's phrase[23] – in which universities in particular, but also cultural institutions such as museums, were entrusted with the not inconsiderable task of making hitherto obscure individuals and under-researched works accessible and fruitful for this socialist cultural heritage.[24]

This brings us back to Hans Joachim Neidhardt and his research on Dresden Romanticism for exhibitions and publications. It was no coincidence that the Friedrich retrospective at the Albertinum in 1974 – 1975 was declared by the Ministry of Culture of the GDR as a state honour for the artist, even though Friedrich (as well as his Romantic contemporaries) had previously received scant scholarly attention. The artist, who was born in Greifswald in 1774 and spent most of his artistic career in Dresden, seemed ideally suited for appropriation as a historical figure in a socialist cultural heritage because of his biography, which could be set entirely within the confines of the territory of what was now the GDR. Friedrich was much less an obvious choice, however, when it came to attempting to frame his art and its significance within a socialist context. In the accompanying catalogue, the essays published by Peter H. Feist and Irma Emmrich constructed

CASPARDAV

"Close your bodily eye, that you may
see your picture first with your spiritual eye.
Then bring to light what you have seen
in the darkness of your mind,
so that its effect may work on others in the
opposite way, from without to within."

Caspar David Friedrich

Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen
Dresden

Albertinum
Kupferstich-Kabinett

SANDSTEIN