

PRESS VIEW – FRIDAY 2 JULY 2010, 11.30AM – 1PM
NATIONAL GALLERY COMPLEX, The Mound, Edinburgh, EH2 2EL



View from Dosseringen near the Sortedam Lake Looking towards Nørrebro, 1838, Christen Købke, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

CHRISTEN KØBKE: DANISH MASTER OF LIGHT

4 July - 3 October 2010

NATIONAL GALLERY COMPLEX, The Mound, Edinburgh, EH2 2EL

Telephone 0131 624 6200, www.nationalgalleries.org

Admission £7 (£5 concessions)

Christen Købke: Danish Master of Light is the first monographic exhibition of paintings by Christen Købke (1810–1848) to be shown outside Denmark. Købke is the greatest of the Danish Golden Age painters, yet he is still insufficiently known outside his native country. This exhibition will introduce one of the most remarkable European artists of the nineteenth century to British audiences.

This show comprises 48 of Købke's most beautiful and distinguished works spanning a variety of genres: landscape, topography, portraiture and his charming depictions of national monuments. They present some of the most innovative aspects of his work – including outdoor sketching, his fascination with painterly immediacy, and his unique treatment of light and atmosphere.

Scenes include those of his home town, Copenhagen (*The Northern Drawbridge to the Citadel in Copenhagen*, 1837, National Gallery, London); portraits of many of his family and closest friends (*Portrait of the Artist's Mother, Cecilia Margrete Købke*, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh); portraits of fellow artists (*Portrait of the Landscape Painter Frederik Sødring*, 1832, The Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen) and of Danish national monuments (*Frederiksborg Castle View Near the Møntbro Bridge*, 1835, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen).

Denmark's 'Golden Age' – the term used to describe the amazing diversity of intellectual, scientific and cultural achievements of the first half of the 19th century – was nevertheless a time of social inequality and economic

collapse as the nation was declared bankrupt in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. Yet Denmark recovered with remarkable swiftness and creative endeavour to produce in its art defining images of a peaceful, innocent, ordered society. Painters such as Købke reflected this renewal of national pride, depicting their lives and reflecting their surroundings through their art. Købke's work demonstrates his ability to endow ordinary people, places and simple motifs with a universal significance, creating a world in microcosm for the viewer (*Cigar Seller at the Northern Exit from the Citadel*, Musée du Louvre, Paris).

Købke never strayed far from his home city. He left Denmark for only one brief period between 1838 and 1840, reluctantly making the obligatory artists' pilgrimage to Italy and painting scenes such as *Castel dell'Uovo in Naples*, (1838, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen). He found his inspiration more readily in Copenhagen painting his immediate surroundings, almost all of which were within the fortified walls of the Danish capital (*View from Citadel Ramparts Towards Langelinie and the Naval Harbour*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen). The 'Golden Age' has become known as 'the age of Købke' and his precise and clear-cut manner, sharp focus and pristine light are now synonymous with our image of this era.

Michael Clarke, Director of the National Gallery of Scotland said: 'Købke is a really wonderful artist, but until now he has remained a well-kept secret as far as the British public is concerned. We have had tremendous support from the Danish museums, who are lending very generously to this show. We, and our partners at the London National Gallery, are the only British galleries who already own works by Købke so it is very fitting that we should collaborate on this project.'

Christen Købke: Danish Master of Light is organised with the National Gallery in London (17 March – 13 June 2010). It is curated by Professor David Jackson of the University of Leeds. His research has been generously funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

For further information and images please contact the National Galleries of Scotland's press office on 0131 624 6325/6247/6314/6332 or pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors

CATALOGUE

Christen Købke: Danish Master of Light

David Jackson with a contribution by Kasper Monrad

Published by the National Galleries of Scotland in association with The National Gallery, London