

JOHAN PETER RAADSIG

COPENHAGEN 1806 – COPENHAGEN 1882

Because the artist's father, Captain Søren Christian Raadsig, died in a shipwreck when his son was only six months old, his mother later remarried, her new husband being the land agent at the mansion of Skjoldenæsholm in central Zealand. Thus the boy experienced four or five years of growing up in a countryside with beautiful rural surroundings which would mark him for life and leave its traces in his artistic work.

*Peter Raadsig was then sent to school in Copenhagen, where he later became an apprentice painter; at the same time he was admitted to the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. However, according to his statement for Philip Weilbach's *Konstnerlexikon*, it was only after successfully completing his apprenticeship as an artisan painter that he was able to devote himself properly to training as an artist. In 1827 Raadsig progressed to the life school; three years later, he was awarded the minor silver medal, and in 1831 came the major silver medal, but like so many others of the Academy pupils, he competed in vain for the minor gold medal. That was in 1839.*

*Nor did his efforts to gain financial support for a journey to Italy from the *Fonden ad Usus Publicos* bear fruit, and he was obliged to finance it himself. On the recommendation of others, including C.W. Eckersberg and Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), he spent 1841–1845 in Rome, after which he extended his visit abroad with a year in Munich. Throughout all of this period, he lived in very difficult financial circumstances.*

*In 1857, Raadsig won the Neuhausen Prize for a work entitled *Vildttype i forhør hos en birke-dommer* (Poachers Being Questioned by a District Judge), which was bought by Heinrich Hirschsprung (1836–1908).*

*Johan Peter Raadsig first exhibited at Charlottenborg in the spring of 1831 with a painting of an old woman reading the Bible. After this, year by year until 1883, there followed an enormous flow of works for the Charlottenborg exhibitions. In addition, he participated in exhibitions in the Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm in 1850, 1860, 1866, 1868 and 1870 and in the *Nordisk Kunststilling* in Copenhagen in 1872.*

*For a time in the middle of the 1830's, Raadsig, like many of his fellow artists, was deeply engrossed in subjects from Danish history, not least as portrayed in the literature of the time. It was especially the novels of B.S. Ingemann¹ (1789–1862) that inspired him to paint, but also the poems of Christian Winther (1796–1876). And not least, there was the book entitled *Store og gode Handlinger af Danske, Norske og Holstenere* (Great and Good Deeds by Danes, Norwegians and Holsteiners) from 1777, written by the historian Ove Malling (1747–1829), which appealed to the national feelings so dominant at the time.*

Raadsig also painted landscapes, including many hunting scenes inspired by his links with Skjoldenæsholm, as well as various genre-like figure pictures. In Rome he produced a large number of

depictions of everyday life. Like Marstrand, he found his inspiration for this in the etchings of the Roman painter Bartolomeo Pinelli. (See Marstrand's *An Englishman Pursued by Beggars in Rome* in the Loeb collection.)

It has been said of Peter Raadsig's oeuvre that he set about painting everything with a great narrative enthusiasm which his artistic abilities were not always able to live up to. However, this does not apply to the lyrical hunting scene in the Loeb collection, with its sensitive colouring.

Raadsig was one of the first Danish artists to make his way to Hornbæk in northern Zealand and Skagen at the northernmost tip of Jutland in order to paint pictures of the life of the fisherfolk. There is a work painted by him in 1852 in Hornbæk in Vejle Kunstmuseum. The Loeb collection contains several examples of later famous artists' works from the same localities such as Michael Ancher and Carl Locher.

S.L.

LITERATURE: Philip Weilbach, *Dansk Konsterlexikon*, Copenhagen 1877–78; Karl Madsen, *Skagens Malere og Skagens Museum*, 1929, pp. 10, 16; Jens Peter Munk in: Weilbach, Vol. 7, Copenhagen 1998.

¹Vilhelm Kyhn was also inspired by the novels of B.S. Ingemann. (See *Evening Atmosphere* in the Loeb collection.)