

LUDVIG AUGUST SMITH

COPENHAGEN 1820 – COPENHAGEN 1906

Ludvig August Smith entered the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen at the age of 14, studying there for seven years, partly under Professor J.L. Lund (1777–1867). He completed his training in 1841 having won the major silver medal, but without going on to take part in the competition for the gold medal. However, he also studied as a private pupil of C.W. Eckersberg for three years around 1841.

It was Smith's ambition to become a historical painter, and the first work he exhibited was a family scene in 1840. Until 1887 he exhibited regularly at Charlottenborg, not only genre scenes, but also figure pictures representing events from Danish history. In his 1869 letter to Weilbach's Kunstnerleksikon, he draws special attention to three paintings that are unknown today: A Bachelor, Supplicants and A Grocer's Family. In addition he painted a number of portraits, including one of the painter J.V. Gertner (1818–1871), which is now in Thorvaldsens Museum.

Although Smith had learnt the craft of painting, he did not succeed in making a name for himself among the painters of the Golden Age, and like so many others he had to live on occasional assignments. For instance, he was commissioned by the firm of E. Bærentzen & Co. to execute a considerable number of portrait drawings that were used as the bases of lithographic prints. Before photography became widespread there was a great demand for such portraits of famous men. Smith specialised in portraying public servants and officers, but also drew a small number of famous personalities such as the poet Adam Oehlenschläger (1779–1850). In addition, he gave lessons in drawing.

Smith took part in the City Hall Exhibition of 1901 and is represented in Copenhagen City Museum and Vejle Kunstmuseum. There are drawings by him in the Collection of Prints and Drawings in Statens Museum for Kunst.

E.F.

LITERATURE: Hanne Jönsson in: *C.W. Eckersberg*, Statens Museum for Kunst 1983; Kasper Monrad, *Hverdagsbilleder*, Copenhagen 1989; Marianne Saabye in: *Den nøgne Guldalder*, Den Hirschsprungske Samling, 1994, pp. 122–127; Peter Nørgaard Larsen in: *Weilbach*, Vol. 7, Copenhagen 1998.