

JENS JUEL

1745–1802

67. *Seated Chinese Man in Mandarin Dress, c. 1780's*

(*En siddende kineser i mandarindrags*)

Oil on canvas, 16½ x 13½ in. (42 x 34,5 cm)

PROVENANCE: Gift from Artist to *materialforvalter* (storehouse manager) Jonas Eschemoës and wife, Louise Ulrike, friends of Juel; hofkirurg, etatsråd O.C.E. Schwartzkopf and wife (née Hostrup-Schultz) Estate Auction 1893, no.749, bought by cand. Larsen; Winkel & Magnussen, Auction 130, Professor Karl Larsen, 1933, lot 245, ill. p.41; Grosserer Aage Backhaus; Ms. Ellen Krøyer Christensen; Editor Svend Kragh-Jacobsen; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 465, 1984, lot 1, ill.p.10.

EXHIBITED: Kunstforeningen, *Jens Juel*, 1909, no. 228; Københavns Bymuseum, *Københavnsk kultur i det 18. århundrede*, 1966, no. 215, ill. plate XII; Kunstforeningen, *Jens Juel i privat eje*, 1982, no. 37; Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr.*, 1994, no. 13. 1994, no. 13.

LITERATURE: Herman Madsen, *Kunst i privat Eje*, I–III, Copenhagen 1944–45, Vol. II, p. 205, ill.; Herman Madsen, *200 Danske Malere og deres Værker*, I–II, Copenhagen, 1946, Vol.I, p. 40, ill.; Ellen Poulsen, *Jens Juel Katalog, Catalogue, Malerier og pasteller, Paintings and Pastels*, 1–2, Copenhagen 1991, Vol. 1, no. 263, ill., Vol. 2, p.198; Peter Nisbet, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John Loeb, Jr.*, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1994, discussed and ill. p.3.

The Loeb picture has the elegant yet matter-of-fact realism for which Juel is renowned. Although not a commissioned portrait of an identifiable individual, it treats the exotic subject, a seated Chinese man in Mandarin dress, with dignified respect. Juel painted at least three versions of this subject. This version depicts the Chinese man in profile in a mandarin jacket with a blue lining, decorated with a blue silk embroidered front; he wears a black hat with a red point and holds a brown pipe. Even though the clothes and chair did not belong to the sitter, they were probably part of the export goods on board the ships in the China trade in which Denmark was involved. Porcelain, dolls, decorated paper and furniture were some of the most traded items in the Asiatic Company. Years later, in 1792, Juel made a drawing for P.A. Heiberg's play *The Chinatrader* which depicts a man giving such objects to his lover.¹

The Loeb painting was given by the artist to a friend, an official of the Royal Asiatic Company active in China trade. This appropriate association is reinforced by an early inscription on the back of a larger version of this picture (now at the Georg-August University of Göttingen), which can be translated: "A Chinese second helmsman on a Danish China clipper, which was partly crewed by Chinese. Painted from the life (but in Mandarin clothes) by the great portrait painter Jens Juel of Copenhagen." The picture thus attests both to Juel's skill and sensitivity, and also to the expanding horizons of the Danish commercial classes. It surely speaks also of an enlightened respect for human beings of other races.

B.H.
assisted by P.N.

¹This drawing can be found in The Royal Danish Print Collection. Charlotte Christensen (ed.), *Hvis engle kunne male*, Det Nationalhistoriske Museum på Frederiksborg Slot 1996, p.158.