

FREDERIK CHRISTIAN JACOBSEN KIÆRSKOU (KIÆRSCHOU)

COPENHAGEN 1805 – COPENHAGEN 1891

F. C. Kiærskou, whose father was a police court copy clerk, lost his parents at an early age, after which he became a pupil in the Royal Orphanage School, an institution founded by Frederik IV in 1727 to support children whose fathers had died. Because young Frederik Christian showed a talent for drawing even as a child, the principal of the orphanage ensured that he was given a place in the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Drawing in 1820. Here, J. P. Møller advised that the boy should learn decorative painting before thinking of becoming a landscape artist.

Kiærskou's training thus took more than ten years in the traditional classes in the Academy. At the same time, he was apprenticed for three years to a master painter by the name of Rasmussen, after which he worked for five years as a decorative painter in a firm called Hambros Enke.

In 1832, F. C. Kiærskou won the Academy's proxime accessit in landscape art, and the following year he was awarded the money prize for Et parti træer i Classens have (A Group of Trees in Classens Have). In time he also received travel grants from sources including Fonden ad Usus Publicos, which enabled him to undertake an extended study visit to Germany and Switzerland at the beginning of the 1840s. He also visited Sweden several times.

Kiærskou was accorded recognition by the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen in 1843 and became a member in 1845. Three years later he was appointed a member of the Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. In 1859 he became a titular professor in the Danish Academy, and eight years later he was given an official residence at Charlottenborg.

Kiærskou left a very large oeuvre (mainly of landscape motifs), equally distributed among Denmark and the mountainous regions of southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland as well as a number of Swedish localities. He made his debut at Charlottenborg in 1826 and exhibited there almost every year, often showing large numbers of works until 1882.

F. C. Kiærskou worked in the same landscape tradition as the trio of J. Th. Lundbye, P. C. Skovgaard, and D. Dreyer (1816–1852), as well as the contemporary but rather later developed Vilhelm Kyhn. In contrast to these, however, Kiærskou was so firmly anchored in the classic international painting metaphor based on older copperplate engravings rather than outdoor studies that he never managed to acquire the vibrant view of nature that characterized the works of his younger colleagues. Nor can Kiærskou's works be said to be typically national romantic, although many of the motifs were Danish.

With his predilection for lighting in the manner of Claude Lorrain (c. 1600–1682), he was closely related to J. P. Møller's landscape art. But there is nothing to suggest that he was ever a pupil of Møller, who, like Kiærskou, occupied an important post as conservator.

S.L.

LITERATURE: Henrik Bramsen, *Landskabsmaleriet i Danmark 1750–1875*, Copenhagen 1935, pp. 89–90; Laura Jacobsen, *Søllerød, set med malerøje*, Copenhagen 1983; Peter Nørgaard Larsen in *Weilbach*, vol. 4, Copenhagen 1996.