

C. W. ECKERSBERG

1783–1853

151. *Portrait of Smith J. N. Grønborg, 1805*

(*Portræt af smed J.N. Grønborg*)

Oil on canvas, 12 x 10 in. (31 x 24,5 cm)

Not signed

PROVENANCE: The Danish painter J.P. Møller (1783–1854); his daughter, Mrs Frederikke Winther; Charlotte Winther; Kunsthallen Auction 211 (Charlotte Winther), 1956, lot 1; descendants after J.P. Møller; Bruun Rasmussen Auction 911, 2022, lot 192, ill.

EXHIBITIONS: *Udstillingen af C. W. Eckersbergs Malerier*, Kunstforeningen, Copenhagen 1895, no. 3

LITERATURE: Emil Hannover: *C. W. Eckersberg*, Copenhagen 1898, p. 13, no. 5

C.W. Eckersberg was only 22 years old when he painted the portrait of the smith J. N. Grønborg (1722–1813). At the time, he was studying at the Royal Danish Art Academy in Copenhagen.

The J. N. Grønborg portrait is considered by Emil Hannover, biographer of Eckersberg, to be a replica of a portrait with the approximate same measurements, though the latter is framed by a painted oval. The oval framed portrait was owned in 1898 by Mrs. Wilhelmine Ottesen, most likely Wilhelmine Amalia née Büntzow, the third wife of flower painter O. D. Ottesen (1816–1892). In addition, Hannover mentions yet another replica of the painting, as well as a copy.

Eckersberg knew his subject, as he rented quarters with Grønborg's son in Copenhagen. The portrayal of the old man in red coat, white cravat and fur cap is exceptionally filled with character and a very early testament to the artist's great talent for portraiture. Hannover assumes that the painting was a gift to the painter J. P. Møller, who was a close friend of the artist.

E.F.