

## CONSTANTIN HANSEN

1804–1880

### 43. *Study of a Male Model*

(*Mandlig modelstudie*)

Oil on canvas, 17¼ x 16⅔ in. (43,5 x 41,5 cm)

PROVENANCE: Editor Svend Kragh-Jacobsen; Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 465, 1984, lot 19.

EXHIBITED: Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr.*, 1994, no. 10.

LITERATURE: Peter Nisbet, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century, from the Collection of Ambassador John Loeb Jr.*, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994, discussed and ill. pp. 4–5.

The attribution of this painting to Constantin Hansen has not been documented, but derives from Arne Bruun Rasmussen, who had a profound knowledge of Danish Golden Age painting.

While Constantin Hansen was a pupil, the teaching in the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen was divided into junior and senior classes. In the latter, students were allowed first to draw and later to paint live models. In the life class, work was mostly carried out in the evening in artificial light, and the professors took turns, a month at a time, during which they arranged the model's pose.

Constantin Hansen attended the academy's life class from 1825 to 1833, when he was taught by such diverse professors as J. F. Clemens (1741–1838), C. A. Lorentzen, (1746–1825), J. L. Lund (1777–1867), and C. W. Eckersberg.

Eckersberg's teaching differed markedly from that of the other teachers in that he placed his models in natural, almost everyday poses, and did so in bright daylight when they were to be painted in oils. Eckersberg's aim was to expand the traditional life studies which had always had history painting as their objective, i.e., the ability to produce famous historical, mythological, or religious scenes.

Professor Eckersberg's pupils learned especially to see the figure in relation to light and shade, to the laws of perspective, and to the immediate physical surroundings.

This work is traditional in arrangement for historical painting. The model is supporting himself on the obligatory rope, necessary for the model to be able to stay in the pose. He has been placed in artificial light so as to allow training in the dramatic effect of strong shadows deriving from historical painting's demands for such things as a heroic and masculine appearance. (The public of the time interpreted strong shadows as heroic and masculine.)

This life study shows the influence of Eckersberg's radical teaching in its realism and its harmonious and artless arrangement. Eckersberg exerted a great influence on Constantin Hansen, who became one of the pupils by whom he set the greatest store.

S.L.