

ARKEN

New exhibition sheds light on the rivalry and friendship between two giants in Danish art

MICHAEL ANCHER - P.S. KRØYER

Friends and rivals

27 September 2014 – 12 April 2015

Press photos available now

Michael Ancher and P.S. Krøyer were devoted friends, yet also rivals. They were passionate artists who influenced one another's lives and artistic production. Based on 94 major works by both Ancher and Krøyer, and the letters they wrote to each other, ARKEN's exhibition tells the story of one of the most pivotal friendships in Danish art.

This autumn ARKEN in Denmark launches a major exhibition that, for the first time ever, focuses on the relationship between two giants in Danish art, Michael Ancher (1849–1927) and P.S. Krøyer (1851–1909). The focal point will be the scenes painted of their beloved Skagen. Michael Ancher was a permanent resident in Skagen and married to Anna, the local innkeeper's daughter. P.S. Krøyer arrived in town eight years after Ancher and later married the stylish Marie Triepcke. It was Ancher's fishing paintings that lured Krøyer to Skagen, and it was Krøyer's pictures of summer light and artists' parties that rubbed off on Ancher's sceneries. But Ancher and Krøyer also battled with one another. Krøyer strived for an artistic community where inspiration could flow freely and scenes could be shared among colleagues under the open sky. But the down-to-earth and very particular Ancher preferred painting alone, and initially felt threatened by Krøyer's fast brush strokes and vibrant creativity.

It was largely thanks to these two painters and their vastly different temperaments that Skagen was put on the artistic world map at the turn of the last century. Here they created some of the most treasured works in Danish art history.

Skagens Museum, which undergoes major renovations and extensions in September, is loaning ARKEN a quite extraordinary 80 works, which otherwise rarely leave the museum.

Dear Ancher, Dear Krøyer

The letters between Michael Ancher and P.S. Krøyer comprise an important font of knowledge about their relationship and provide a unique insight into their friendship and periodic rivalry, as well as their thoughts on art and life in general. The letters serve as a guide for the exhibition in the form of an introductory sound montage and listening posts, where the most important of the letters are read aloud.

Encounter between copy and original

The friendship between Ancher and Krøyer lay somewhere between mutual inspiration and spirited competition, and endured several controversies over the years in the battle to paint the same scenes. In the summer of 1897, Ancher couldn't help himself from painting a copy of one of Krøyer's works. It was the preliminary draft of the famous picture of the two artists' wives, Anna and Marie, walking in the surf, their backs to the artist. For the first time in 117 years, these two versions will meet at the exhibition – Krøyer's preliminary draft and Ancher's copy – making it possible to compare the two artists' brushstrokes directly in the identical scenes. One of the listening posts in the exhibition contains quotes from Ancher's moving 'confession' – the letter in which he acknowledges having copied the work, and Krøyer's generous forgiveness.

The exhibition opens at ARKEN from 27 September 2014 – 12 April 2015.

A press meeting is scheduled at ARKEN on Thursday 25 September at 11.00 am.

Museum director Christian Gether will bid everyone welcome, and museum inspector Andrea Rygg Karberg will then introduce the exhibition.

The press meeting will be followed by lunch in ARKEN's café.

Final registration deadline is Monday 22nd September at 10 am to natascha.jespersen@arken.dk

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