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JENS JUEL (1745–1802)
PRINCESS LOUISE AUGUSTA IN A TURKISH COSTUME,
1785–1786
OIL ON CANVAS

45 X 34 CM

Jens Juel has painted a young woman wearing an eye-catching outfit: an orientalising costume in a so-called Circassian style, also known as *à la circassienne*. The ensemble – a long-sleeved golden gown lined with pale pink fabric, a belt with oval buckles, and a short-sleeved blue velvet robe edged with ermine – was certainly not one you would see worn by just anyone at this time, in the mid-1780s.¹

Indeed, the woman in Juel's portrait is not just any woman. She is Princess Louise Augusta of Denmark (1771–1843), then approximately fifteen years of age. She was officially the daughter of Christian VII and Caroline Mathilde, but presumably her biological father was the royal physician to Christian VII, J.F. Struensee (1737–1772). Her brother was Frederik VI (B 348). Juel's portrait was created around the year Louise Augusta married the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sønderborg-Augustenburg, Frederik Christian II

(1765–1814), after which she became the ‘Duchess of Augustenborg’.

Due to her status and position – and allegedly also her beauty – Princess Louise Augusta was a leading figure at the Danish court at a time when masked balls were popular as a form of socialising. Here, clothes and costumes of ‘foreign appearance’ were very much in vogue, and today the princess’s dress is seen as clear evidence of the widespread eighteenth-century fascination with the exotic.² Louise Augusta’s oriental attire and the white mask she holds in her right hand should also be seen as markers of her social position in this carefully staged portrait, where the large-patterned tablecloth, the low sofa with the red velvet cushion with gold tassels as well as the red drapery and the black marbled column in the background all help to set the scene.

Juel painted several versions of this portrait of Louise Augusta.³ He also portrayed her on other occasions, for example, he did a full-length portrait of her – the first royal portrait to depict its sitter out in the open air.⁴

Lent to the exhibition

Jens Juel – Under the skin

Kunstmuseum Brandts, Odense, Danmark

February 8 - August 24, 2025

Fuglsang Kunstmuseum, Toreby L., Denmark

September 11, 2025 – January 18, 2026

Ribe Kunstmuseum, Ribe, Denmark

February 7 - May 28, 2026

¹ *Apart from this portrait, all the women who have worn similar outfits in Juel’s portraits have been foreign or actresses. See Ellen Andersen: Moden i 1700-årene, Copenhagen 1977, (Danske dragter; 1), pp. 196–200.*

² *Besides the work in David’s Collection, three other versions reputedly exist. See Ellen Poulsen: Jens Juel, Vol. 1, Katalog, Copenhagen 1991, p. 121.*

³ *Thyge Fønss-Lundberg and Anna Schram Vejlbj: Jens Juel. En europæisk mester, Copenhagen 2021, pp. 86–93.*

⁴ *Jens Juel, Prinsesse Louise Augusta, 1787. The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg.*

Published in:

V. Winkel & Magnussen (eds.): *Kunst i privat eje*, vol. 1, København 1944, fig. 3, p. 139; Ellen Andersen: *Moden i 1700-årene*, København 1977, pp.196-197 (*Danske dragter*; 1); Ellen Poulsen: *Jens Juel. Malerier i privat eje*, Kunstforeningen, København 1982, cat. 42, p. 35; Ellen Poulsen: *Jens Juel. Vol. 1, Katalog*, København 1991, cat. 383, p. 121; Thyge Fønss-Lundberg and Anna Schram Vejlbj: *Jens Juel. En europæisk mester*, København 2021, p. 93; A similar painting can be seen in Haydn Williams: *Turquerie: an eighteenth-century European fantasy*, London 2014, pp. 101-102, fig.

128;