



Inv. no. B 348

JENS JUEL (1745–1801)
FREDERIK VI AS CROWN PRINCE REGENT, 1787
OIL ON CANVAS

233.5 X 160 CM

In 1780, Jens Juel was appointed royal court painter, and in the years that followed he was asked to paint a large number of full-length portraits of the royal family, including Crown Prince Frederik (1768–1839), who was the son of Christian VII (1749–1808) and Queen Caroline Mathilde (1751–1775). In 1784 – at the age of just 16 – the crown prince instigated a coup d'état, and from then on he was the legitimate representative of the crown (Crown Prince Regent) until 1808 when, following his father's death, he was crowned as King Frederik VI of Denmark and Norway.

Juel has depicted Frederik VI as Crown Prince Regent at the age of approximately 19. Wearing elegant clothes and the blue ribbon and star of the Order of the Elephant, the crown prince is seen standing in a noble interior. With his inviting gesture it seems as if he is welcoming the viewer. Closer study of the image reveals that Frederik VI is in the audience suite at Christiansborg Palace, which at this point

in time – in 1787 – was the king's residence. He is placed next to a console table on which is a table clock, and the sculpture in the background is *Amor patriae. Allegory Symbolising Patriotism* (1777), executed by the English sculptor Carl Frederik Stanley (1738-1813).¹

The full-length portrait of Frederik VI is particularly interesting because it sees Juel take a completely new approach to the particular section of the portrait genre, the state portrait. Earlier in the eighteenth century – and still at this time – state portraits were distinguished by being grandly magnificent, carefully staged and with compositions infused with the Rococo delight in illusionistic rendering of materials, elegant poses, and faces with measured smiles. Juel departs from this tradition by portraying a friendlier, more welcoming regent with no traces of the arrogance and aloofness seen in such portraits in the past. The composition, too, is simpler than in its predecessors. Finally, Juel's work is also among the first Danish state portraits to be set in real-life rooms with real-life furniture.²

C. L. David acquired the portrait of Crown Prince Frederik VI in 1932. Today, the collection holds fourteen works by Juel, encompassing paintings, pastels and drawings.

¹ Thyge Fønss-Lundberg and Anna Schram Vejlbj: *Jens Juel. En europæisk mester, Copenhagen 2021, p. 113.*

² For more information on this and the other portraits that Juel paints in the 1780s, see: Thyge Fønss-Lundberg and Anna Schram Vejlbj: *Jens Juel. En europæisk mester, Copenhagen 2021, pp. 110–116.*

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