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CHRISTEN KØBKE (1810–1848)  
ONE OF THE SMALL TOWERS ON FREDERIKSBORG CASTLE, C.  
1834  
OIL ON CANVAS

25.5 X 18.5 CM

Frederiksborg Castle was a favourite subject in Danish Golden Age, constituting a historical monument as well as a symbol of the nation's proud past. Several painters depicted the castle repeatedly, including Jørgen Roed, P.C. Skovgaard and – especially – Christen Købke, who visited Frederiksborg Castle for the first time in the summer of 1831. He immediately saw its qualities as artistic subject matter, and in the years that followed he would regularly draw and paint scenes from there.

In this small painting, Købke has painted the view from one of the towers of Frederiksborg Castle, showing the copper-clad spires of the castle's north-east corner tower and the staircase tower in the north-east corner of the main building. From there, the view continues towards the fields and forest on the other side of the castle lake. The wide view out across the landscape creates a vivid impression of both

height and distance, and to indicate the scale, Købke has painted a stork on one of the two brick chimneys and another stork in the air above the landscape.

Architectural scenes that provide a clear overview of the entire building were very popular at the time. However, Købke opted for a very different approach because he was among those painters who cultivated a new aesthetic and a new visual idiom.<sup>1</sup> As in some of his other scenes from Frederiksborg Castle (31/2014), Købke chose to paint only a small, closely cropped section of the castle and furthermore did so from a surprising point of view, creating an interesting and – for its time – highly modern visual effect. Another eye-catching feature concerns the treatment of forms where different elements, awash in intense sunlight, contrast and harmonise to striking effect.

In 1834–1835, Købke repeated the motif from Frederiksborg Castle as part of the decoration of the dining room in his parents' house on Blegdammen in Copenhagen.<sup>2</sup> In that version, which measures no less than 177 x 162 cm, Købke expanded the scene to show more of the roof ridge above the so-called princess wing, creating a different visual impression.

<sup>1</sup> According to Karina Lykke Grand, these pictures – often executed in small formats – startled audiences because of their seemingly insignificant everyday subject matter, their point of view, manner of painting or cropping. See Karina Lykke Grand: 'Dansk guldalder – Perioden og begrebets historie' in Cecilie Høgsbro Østergaard (ed.): *Verdenskunst mellem to katastrofer*, SMK, København 2019, s. 55–57.

<sup>2</sup> Christen Købke, *One of the Small Towers on Frederiksborg Castle, c. 1834-1835*. Belongs to Designmuseum Danmark, since 2016 deposited at SMK, DEP690.

Published in:

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