



Inv. no. B 360

CHRISTEN KØBKE (1810–1848)
THE GROCER H.W. PETERSEN, 1838
OIL ON CANVAS

94 X 73 CM

Christen Købke's life-sized portrait shows a seated gentleman. The carefully composed painting is kept in muted shades throughout, from the dark jacket, the reddish brocade waistcoat to the white shirt and the red tablecloth in the lower right corner. Prominent features include the man's dishevelled, greying hair, the open letter in his right hand and his cool, almost absent look. As observers, we get the feeling of having disturbed the man in his reading of the letter, which is addressed to Mr H.W. Petersen, Copenhagen.

The portrait depicts Købke's maternal uncle, the grocer Hans Wilhelm Petersen (1770–1847) at the age of 68. He became a grocer in 1798, and the following year he set up business in Klædeboderne (now Skindergade) in Copenhagen. Later, the business moved to 'Gardergaarden' in Vestergade, and over several decades, the grocer amassed a considerable fortune.¹ His prosperity can be sensed in Købke's portrait, which was executed eight years after he passed on

his business to one of his sons, Christian Frederik Petersen, who was Købke's cousin as well as brother-in-law, and whom he portrayed in 1833.²

The portrait was created during a productive period in Købke's brief life when he often chose sitters among his family, fellow artists and friends when creating portraits. These were predominantly small and intimate. At the same time, Købke also moved towards a more monumental and representative idiom as he, during these years, received directions offered by the Danish sculptor H.E. Freund (1786–1840).³

C.L. David acquired the portrait in 1940. Out of the five works by Købke in The David Collection, this is the only one personally acquired by its founder.

¹ Hans Edvard Nørgaard-Nielsen and Kasper Monrad (eds.): *Christen Købke 1810–1848*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 1996, p. 75.

² *Christen Købke, Portrait of the Artist's Cousin and Brother-in-Law, the Grocer Christian Petersen*, SMK, inv.no. KMS3159.

³ For more, see Th. Hauch-Fausbøll and P. Fr. Rist: *Min slægtebog*, ed. by Holger Petersen, Copenhagen 1918, pp. 37–44.

Published in:

Katalog over Malerier og Studier af Christen Schiellerup Købke, Udstillede i Kunstforeningen i Foraaret 1884, Kunstforeningen, København 1884, cat. 68, p. 11;

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Fortegnelse over Christen Købkes Malerier: Kunstforeningen Marts-April 1912, København 1912, cat. 126;

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Dansk kunst og kunsthåndværk, Davids Samling, København 1972, p. 11 and plante 7;

Verner Jul Andersen: *Dansk kunst og kunsthåndværk*, Davids Samling, 2. ed., København 1983, cat. 425 and ill. p. 173;

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