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MARTYNA ŁUKASIEWICZ

The Origins of the National Gallery of Denmark. Danish National Art in the Theory and Exhibition Practice of Niels Laurits Høyen

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INTRODUCTION

"Almost no one has had as much influence on Denmark's artistic life as Høyen. Surrounded by all the leading figures of cultural life, he played every imaginable role in the realm of art: he was teaching the artists, criticizing and acquiring their works; for those artists who found themselves amenable to his tutelage, his support was granted, but if they stood in his way, he was merciless."[1] The words of Kasper Monrad, longstanding curator of the National Gallery of Denmark, although written over 140 years after the death of the first Danish art historian, Niels Laurits Høyen (1798–1870), evoke reminiscent parallels with the discerning assessments of Høyen and other preeminent museologist of the era, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788–1865), by a painter, Wilhelm Bendz (1804–1832). In September 1831 Bendz wrote in a letter from Munich: "Høyen and Thomsen, they are two men who do more harm than good with their talk, and you are as afraid of them as of a Satan himself, when you do something that did not please them […]. God save us!"[2] Both within the context of his own era and from the vantage point of contemporary research on Danish art history, Niels Laurits Høyen emerges as the most powerful and influential figure, whose significance extends not only to the development of the Danish art scene during the 19th century, but also to the discipline itself.

Høyen indeed became the first who took a chair of art history in Denmark, as in 1829 he assumed a professorship in the history of art and mythology at the Academy of Fine Arts, and in 1856 he became a docent of art history at the University of Copenhagen. Moreover, he was a founding member of both the Art Society and the Nordic Art Society in Copenhagen. He also emerged as a prominent art critic, actively engaging in the appraisal of artworks presented at the Academy exhibitions held at Charlottenborg. Høyen's critiques, conveyed through press reviews and public speeches, held considerable sway in the art world. His lectures, whether intended for students or delivered to a broader audience, wielded a profound influence on the development of art history as an academic discipline in Denmark, directly impacting the work of artists and attaining an almost legendary status.

Høyen was equally engaged in scholarly discourse and museum-related endeavours. Within this domain, his involvement spanned a spectrum of activities, ranging from writing the catalogue for Adam Gottlob Moltke's collection and organizing the collection of royal portraits

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[1] Kasper Monrad, *Dansk Guldalder. Lyset, landskabet og hverdagslivet* (København: Gyldendal, 2013), 123.
All translations in this dissertation are by the author, unless otherwise stated.

[2] Cit. per: Charlotte Christensen, *Guldalderens billedverden* (København: Gyldendal, 2019), 20.

at Frederiksborg Castle, to the contributions toward the establishment of the Thorvaldsen Museum. Nonetheless, his most significant role came to fruition in his capacity as an inspector, and later the director, of the Royal Picture Gallery, that served as the foundation upon which the National Gallery of Denmark (Statens Museum for Kunst) was established. His enduring engagement in the Gallery's affairs, from the moment he assumed the position of an inspector in 1839 until his demise in 1870, underscores the core of his commitment. Amongst the multifarious spheres of his involvement, it is the Royal Picture Gallery that emerges as the most intricate, serving as the crucible wherein both his roles as an art historian and museologist coalesce.

Faced with the imperative of transforming the existing royal collection into a national institution, Høyen had to express, on the one hand, his connoisseur's knowledge, acquired and deepened through his extensive travels to Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands; on the other hand, he drew upon his experience as a museologist, capable of shaping a picture gallery, akin to other European museums established at that time. In this regard, it is crucial to underscore that Høyen's activities unfolded within a broader historical context, and the trajectory of Gallery's development mirrors significant transitions, encapsulating the shift from absolutism to a nation-state, alongside the attendant tensions.

At the juncture of Høyen's stewardship, the Royal Picture Gallery was accountable to the monarchy, but with the advent of the constitutional framework in 1849, a series of changes unfurled, signifying the shift of royal collections to state ownership and the transfer of administrative oversight for museums to the state apparatus. The Royal Picture Gallery, situated within the Christiansborg Palace, which, since 1850, also housed the Danish Parliament, reflected these profound changes. Consequently, the main objective of the Gallery, beyond its role as a repository for the royal painting collection, was to showcase contemporary Danish art. This effort conformed to the wider museological trends of the 19th century and laid the groundwork for the formation of Denmark's National Gallery. The display of Danish painting formed the core of today's collection and swiftly became a focal point for discussions in Copenhagen and beyond.

The driving force behind the Gallery's transformation was Høyen, whose activities encompassed the reconfiguration of the old masters' collection, as well as the establishment of the permanent exhibition of contemporary Danish painting. These initiatives were underpinned by his role as an art historian and lecturer, with an emphasis on his theory of national art. Høyen's two lectures, *On the Conditions for the Development of Scandinavian National Art* from

1844 and *On National Art* from 1863, marked a seminal point in the national art movement in the 19th-century Denmark, though their significance extends beyond an initial impact, manifested in enduring and far-reaching implications. In Høyen's perspective, Danish artists should seek inspiration within their own country, rather than venturing southward to Germany or Italy as was commonplace. He propounded an iconography that incorporated Danish nature, rural communities, and maritime landscapes, remaining deeply rooted in a robust Danish identity. Høyen posited that artworks would attain a heightened resonance if artists rendered their own history and homeland, as opposed to sourcing themes and inspirations from abroad or European history. His lectures unequivocally advocated for artists to undertake a leading role in the national discourse, a stance that harmonized with the views of fellow national-liberal figures such as Orla Lehmann (1810-1870), and Ditlev Gothard Monrad (1811–1887).

Høyen's discerning selection of artists and motifs, intricately aligned with his artistic principles, took on added significance as he not only brought specific artists to the forefront but also bolstered their careers and propelled them forward through his extensive network. Consequently, many artists recognized now as key figures of the first half of the 19th century (a period later designated as the Danish Golden Age) include those whom Høyen was accused of favouring, such as Johan Thomas Lundbye (1818-1848), or Peter Christian Skovgaard (1817-1875). Through his role in the acquisition policies at the Royal Picture Gallery, the Art Society, and the Society for Nordic Art (with subsequent dispersion of the latter two collections between National Gallery of Denmark and the Aarhus Art Museum), Høyen exerted a lasting influence over the enduring art collections that exist today.

State of research

Given the substantial nature of Høyen's impact, as well as his widespread presence in nearly every publication focused on 19th-century Danish art, the lack of a thorough investigation into his endeavors becomes increasingly conspicuous from both art history and museum studies perspectives. A significant portion of the information contained within Høyen's only biography, published merely two years following his demise in 1872 by his pupil Johan Louis Ussing (1820-1905), which has permeated the literature for years, remains unverified to a large extent.[3] However, a noteworthy facet of this biography emerges in the form of appended selection of

[3] Johan Louis Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned med Bilag af Breve* (Kjøbenhavn: Samfundet til den danske Litteraturs Fremme, 1872).

correspondence, primarily letters to artists and family, penned, for instance, during Høyen's travels. Notably, his selected writings and lectures, published also by Ussing in three volumes during 1871-1876, constitute invaluable resource for analysis.[4] These volumes present a wealth of material for scrutiny and stand as the most frequently cited sources regarding Høyen's legacy. Furthermore, resources from Høyen's time encompass a modest assortment of texts, primarily memoirs, including those by Johannes Fibiger published in 1870 and 1898, as well as articles that attempt to encapsulate Høyen's intellectual legacy and principal accomplishments. These include essays by Leo Swane (1908) and Philip Welbach (1898), Carl Balsgaard's critical text which portrays Høyen as an dictator of art (1873), and Julius Lange's reflections on Høyen as a docent and author (1870).[5]

Subsequent scholars have revisited Høyen's work in an effort to reconstruct his views as an art historian. In this scope, contributions include a notation by Christian Elling in the *Danish Biographical Lexicon* (1942) and Henrik Bramsen's considerations in the *Dansk Kunst: Fra Rokoko til vore Dage* (1942). During the 1950s, Victor Hermansen published text centered on Roskilde Cathedral, a work closely intertwined with Høyen's research on Danish architecture. More comprehensive analyses of Høyen's perspectives on art were undertaken by Else Kai Sass, who highlighted him as a father of the Danish art history in the essay *Niels Lauritz Høyen: dansk kunsthistories fader* (1954) and in the *Kunsthistorie* (1979). In turn, Høyen's role as an art historian and critic was analyzed also by Erik Mortensen (1978).[6] Among contemporary researchers who have paid greater attention to Høyen as an art historian and critic, stands Hans Dam Christensen. In his book on the development of art history as an academic discipline in Denmark, *Forskydningens kunst – Kritiske bidrag til kunsthistoriens historie* (2001), he dedicates a chapter to Høyen's legacy, particularly in the context of his contributions to the advancement of the field of history of art.

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[4] *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter: udgivne paa Foranstaltning af Selskabet for nordisk Konst*, ed. Johan Louis Ussing (København: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1871-76).

[5] Johannes Fibiger, *Mit liv og levned* (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendalske Boghandel Forlag, 1898); Johannes Fibiger, *Professor Niels Laurits Høyens jordefærd den 5. mai 1870* (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendalske Boghandel Forlag, 1870); Leo Swane, "Om Høyen," *Tilskueren*, no. 25 (1908); Philip Weilbach, "N.l. Høyen, Paa 100 aarsdagen for hans godsel," *Kunstbladet*, ed. Emil Hannover (København: Winkel & Magnussens Forlag, 1898); Carl Balsgaard, *Om vore Kunstforhold* (Kjøbenhavn: Triers Bogtrykkeri, 1873); Julius Lange, *N. Høyen som Docent og Forfatter* (Kjøbenhavn: Nutids Kunst, 1870).

[6] Erik Mortensen, "Omrking N.L. Hoyen som kunstkritiker," in *En bog om kunst til*, ed. Else Kai Sass (København: Forum, 1978).

Apart from the biography, only two books were entirely devoted to Høyen. The first one is Erik Drigsdahl's *N. L. Høyen i Italien 1823-25: Rejsebrevene* (1974), which contains Høyen's collected correspondence from the period of his Italian journey with Drigsdahl's comments. The second is Kirsten Agerbæk's doctoral dissertation, *Høyen mellem Classicism og Romantik*, published in 1984. The full title, which can be translated as *Høyen between Classicism and Romanticism. About the ideological basis for N. L. Høyen's work for art in the past and present*, indicates the intent to reconstruct Høyen's thoughts and views, primarily as an art historian, and position him within a specific framework. This approach spans a rich array of philosophical, political, and historical contexts, imbuing the work with a distinctly interdisciplinary character. Although this publication marked a significant advancement in providing a comprehensive perspective on Høyen's contributions to the art discourse, it also encountered criticism. Kirsten-Elizabeth Høgsbro argued that, despite the pressing need for an updated biography of this pioneering and influential figure in Danish art history, Agerbæk's dissertation fell short of this objective, failing to offer a genuine insight into Høyen's character and contributions.[7] According to Hans Vammen, the book diminishes Høyen to a mere amalgamation of influences, overlooking what truly distinguished him as a central figure in the Danish Golden Age, and what renders him relevant for contemporary study.[8] Nonetheless, Agerbæk undeniably offers a valuable overview of the development of philosophical thought in Denmark and the prevailing influences that shaped Høyen's perspective on art history. However, her study also highlights the inherent challenge in reconstructing Høyen's concepts. This difficulty arises partly from the extensive array of subjects he engaged with and partly from the evolution of his viewpoints across various periods.

While a revised biography or a comprehensive and critical study of Høyen's legacy as an art historian appear to be prominent areas for future research, it is worth noting that Høyen is more frequently mentioned in the broader context of the Danish Golden Age studies. Danish scholars, central to the thematic focus of this discussion due to Høyen's absence from the international discourse, often refer his concepts in relation to the examination of 19th-century Danish art (this includes research on landscape painting or monographs on various artists). In the broader realm of studies concerning the art of the Danish Golden Age, the most significant

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[7] Kirsten-Elizabeth Høgsbro, "N.L. Høyen og Chr. J. Thomsen," *Meddelelser fra Thorvaldsens Museum* (1994), 173.

[8] Hans Vammen, "Kritisk romantik om opfattelsen af den danske guldalder i anledning af en disputats om N.L. Høyen," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 15, no. 2 (1987), 21.

contributions emanate from curators with a specialization in 19th-century Danish art. While numerous works has been published within this field, it is important to highlight seminal contributors, such as Kasper Monrad, whose research is indispensable for understanding of the Danish Golden Age (e.g. *Hverdagsbilleder: dansk guldalder - kunstnerne og deres vilkår*, 1989; *Dansk guldalder: lyset, landskabet og hverdagslivet*, 2013). Moreover, Peter Nørgaard Larsen has made crucial contributions to the discourse through a plethora of articles and a comprehensive essay found in the latest catalogue of the Golden Age exhibition, *Dansk Guldalder: verdenskunst mellem to katastrofer* (2019). Karina Lykke Grand has significantly enriched the scholarly debate with works such as *Dansk Guldalder: Rejsebilleder* (2012) and *Guld. Skatte fra den danske guldalder* (2013). In parallel, Gertrud Oelsner's recent publication, *En fælles forestillet nation: Dansk landskabsmaleri 1807-1875* (2021), stands as an extensive study that not only consolidates existing research on Danish landscape but also introduces novel perspectives for its interpretation.

The historical, political, and social context during Hoyen's era and the Danish Golden Age holds immense significance, thus analyzing the state of art within the backdrop of the political landscape and its influence, as well as the resulting consequences, is a central focus of contemporary Danish research. Among the works that shed light on the intricate relationship between art, national identity, and the evolving political situation during this transformative period, are publications such as *Culture and Conflict: Nation-Building in Denmark and Scandinavia 1800-1930* (2022), edited by Sine Krogh, Thor J. Mednick, and Karina Lykke Grand, as well as Sine Krogh's doctoral thesis titled *Grænsegængere: Konflikter om nationalæstetik, kunstneridentiteter og danskhed i 1800-tallets kunst* (2021). Furthermore, extensive studies are underway, examining artists active during Høyen's time, a considerable number of whom adhered to his guidance and sought his advice. These inquiries intricately examine the lives, artistic creations, and influences of artists within Høyen's circle, shedding light on their roles in shaping the 19th-century Danish art scene. The ongoing research is making rapid strides, leading to the publication of dedicated monographs on numerous prominent Danish artists, such as *Christopher Wilhelm Eckersberg* (ed. Kasper Monrad, 2015), *Wilhelm Marstrand. Den store fortæller* (eds. Jesper Svennngsen and Anne-Mette Villumsen, 2020), *Christen Købke. Danish Master of Light* (eds. Kasper Monrad and David Jackson, 2010) or *Vilhelm Kyhn and danske landskabsmaleri* (Karina Lykke Grand and Gertrud Oelsner, 2012). Moreover, the epistolary and diary records of artists are extensively disseminated, giving a nuanced panorama of their lives, creative processes, and interactions with collectors, curators, as well as

involvements in the art market (e.g. *C.W. Eckersbergs dagbøger 1810-1853*, ed. Villads Villadsen, 2009; *Johan Thomas Lundbye: dagbøger om tro, skæbne, kunst og kærlighed*, ed. Jesper Svenningsen, 2018).

While the broader context of the Golden Age and its contributing artists has been extensively researched, the history of collections and museums in Denmark has not garnered commensurate attention. This inadequacy is accentuated by the recent publication of the first comprehensive book on private collections in Denmark spanning the 17th to the 19th century, authored by Jesper Svenningsen (*Samlingssteder: Udenlandsk billedkunst i danske samlermiljøer 1690-1840*, 2023). Among the still limited resources on museum history, notable works include the monograph *Dansk museumshistorie* by Holger Rasmussen, which, however, does not focus on art museums and has not been revised since 1979. Furthermore, Camilla Mordhorst's *Genstandsfortællinger: Fra Museum Wormanium til de moderne museer* (2009) and Bente Gundestrup's *Det kongelige danske Kunstkammer 1737 – The Royal Danish Kunstkammer 1737* (1991) offer valuable perspectives on the history of Danish royal collections. Finally, Charlotte Christensen's groundbreaking book, *Guldalderens billedverden* (2019), provides a thorough examination of the Danish Golden Age, with a particular emphasis on art exhibitions in 19th-century Copenhagen.

In the context of museum literature, there is no dedicated work exclusively focused on Høyen as a museologist. However, three publications acknowledge his contributions in a broader context. These works include the fundamental article *Malerisamlingens tilvækst og tilpasning gennem tiderne. Galleriet under Spengler og Høyens revision* (*Kunstmuseets Aarsskrift*, 1924-1925) by Peter Hertz, who describes Høyen's reorganization of the Royal Picture Gallery, but his focus remains primarily on the arrangement of Old Masters paintings. The chapter from the only book dedicated to the history of the National Gallery of Denmark by Villads Villadsen, *Statens Museum for Kunst: 1827-1952* (1998), present a section pertaining to Høyen. However, due to the overarching scope aimed at encapsulating 125 years of museum history, a detailed examination of Høyen's contributions is somewhat constrained. Villadsen focuses on the broader institutional mechanisms and transformative aspects, and while key figures, including Høyen, are acknowledged, his book primarily offers a comprehensive overview of the museum's development. Ultimately, Høyen's involvement in the reorganization of the Royal Picture Gallery, with a particular emphasis on his contributions to the sphere of contemporary Danish art, is examined in the framework of museum studies in subchapters of Britta Tøndborg's doctoral thesis, *From Kunstkammer to Art Museum: Exhibiting and Cataloguing Art in the Royal*

Collections in Copenhagen in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (2004).[9] Although Tøndborg's work addresses mostly the issue of cataloguing, inventory practices, and exhibition techniques within the broader context of Danish museology, it is the sole resource that offers substantial overview of Høyen's efforts in the context of integrating Danish art into the Royal Picture Gallery. While her work does provide a broader context for comprehending the Gallery and is distinctive in addressing the inclusion of contemporary art, it lacks a critical examination. Lastly, none of the authors make an attempt to investigate the nature of Høyen's exhibition, its content, and the degree to which it adhered to his theory of national art.

Objectives and method

The present state of research underscores a significant gap in comprehensive studies dedicated to Niels Laurits Høyen. Despite substantial attention being directed towards his views, frequently within their political context, discussions predominantly cast him as an influential art historian, with relatively infrequent considerations of his role as a museologist. Typically, debate surrounding Høyen is situated within the broader context of the Danish Golden Age period or careers of individual artists, rather than embarking on a thorough exploration of the art of that era from Høyen's distinctive perspective.

My study, however, does not aim to furnish an exhaustive overview, as demonstrated by Kirsten Agerbæk's book, which attempted to cover Høyen's entire body of work — an aspire fraught with challenges that extend beyond the scope of a doctoral thesis. The principal challenge lies in the extensive and scattered nature of the available research material. Høyen's pioneering lectures as Danish art historian covered a vast spectrum of topics, ranging from Greek painting and medieval architecture to Florentine painting during the Renaissance, combining the formation of general views on art, and the development of his theory of national art. Hence, my work hones in on a specific facet, namely Høyen's role in shaping the foundations of the Danish National Gallery. Therefore, an attempt to analyze his views and activities both as an academician and a museologist, is centered around his work in the museum field and his involvement in the realm of Danish contemporary art. Consequently, the primary focus is on a specific, yet fundamentally significant aspect of his contributions — the theory of national art

[9] See also the article based on Tøndborg's Ph.D: Britta Tøndborg, "Hanging the Danes: Danish Golden Age art in a nineteenth century museum context," *Statens Museum for Kunst Art Journal*, no. 24 (2005).

and its impact on the Danish art scene in the 19th century, as well as the question of its practical implementation within the Gallery.

Thus, the main motivation behind my research is to address a previously unexplored question: to what extent did Høyen's theory influence his exhibition practice, and what were the resultant consequences? Additionally, in this study, my aim is to ascertain whether Høyen's theories influenced exhibition practices or, conversely, if museum practices played a role in shaping his theories. In this regard, the work represents the inaugural attempt to reconstruct the Royal Picture Gallery during the period from 1840 to 1870, with a focus on the permanent exhibition of contemporary Danish art and establishment the canon of Danish art in the 19th century. While Tøndborg provided a thorough overview of the contextual mechanisms surrounding Høyen's work, a thorough examination of the practical outcomes of his efforts, such as the arrangement of the Gallery and the selection of paintings, remains conspicuously absent. Therefore, my research aims to bridge this gap by examining whether the Gallery's development was corresponded with broader trends in the pursuit of national artistic ideals.

This study is grounded in a critical analysis of historical source material, the extensive corpus of which encompasses Høyen's own publications, his compiled writings (lectures and exhibition reviews), as well as a rich trove of previously unpublished archival materials, such as notes, diaries, and letters. Augmenting this primary foundation are diverse source materials pertaining to the Gallery, particularly catalogues, which represent an unparalleled reservoir of insights into the development and conceptual framework of the royal collection. Furthermore, the research scope encompasses guidebooks, inventories, floor-plans, press materials, reviews, exhibition catalogues, alongside correspondence and the diaries of artists.

In the context of studying the history of the National Gallery of Denmark, archival materials facilitate a detailed understanding of Høyen's activities and his influence on shaping the institution. The use of archival sources has enabled a critical examination and verification of previous interpretations, introducing new perspectives to the existing literature. Extensive inquiries at the Royal Library and the Archives of the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen uncovered sources essential for analyzing Høyen's contributions as a museologist, and led to revision of the common narrative, as well as offering a more nuanced picture of the Gallery's development. Documentation related to acquisitions, object lists, inventories, and gallery guides has been instrumental in reconstructing the Gallery's display from 1840 to 1870, which forms the foundation for the analyses presented in this study and is included as an appendix.

The research also incorporates inquiries on the history of European museology in the 19th century, giving a critical context for understanding the transformations occurring within the Copenhagen's Gallery. The immediate context here centers on German museums, intricately linked to the cultural exchange between the two countries, including the impact and engagement of German scholars in Copenhagen, spearheaded by Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785-1843).

I abstain, however, from engaging in an extensive discussion regarding the Danish Gallery within the overarching framework of Scandinavian museums in general. This decision is rooted in the discernment that an in-depth contextualization of Denmark within the Scandinavian sphere necessitates a separate discourse, given its inherent intricacies. The omission, consequently, stems from the complexities associated with the attempt to situate Denmark within the broader Scandinavian context, thereby justifying the imperative for a dedicated and nuanced analysis, varying in approach for each case study. For instance, Norway's National Gallery was established in 1842, 15 years after the inauguration of first publicly accessible gallery in Copenhagen and two years after Høyen's revision of the Royal Picture Gallery. In Sweden, the Royal Museum was inaugurated within a wing of the royal palace in Stockholm in 1794. However, only in 1845, the parliamentary assembly decided to establish a National Museum, which included a gallery for paintings and sculptures. This decision ultimately led to the opening of a purpose-built facility to the public in 1866. Meanwhile, in Finland, the National Gallery in Helsinki was inaugurated in 1888. On the one hand, certain trends originating in Denmark may have subsequently influenced neighboring countries; on the other hand, it proves challenging to identify a figure with characteristics similar to Høyen in these contexts. Nonetheless, an in-depth exploration of potential influences and interactions among museum ideas in the Scandinavia region would undoubtedly require dedicated research.

Structure

The structure of the thesis comprises six chapters that serve the purpose of delineating both the broader context for development of 19th-century Danish museums and the emergence of Niels Laurits Høyen as an art historian and museologist, providing a comprehensive understanding of the milieu and the various factors that contributed to the establishment of the Danish National Gallery's foundational principles. The first chapter, *Time of Transitions. Golden Age Denmark* is dedicated to an overview of the historical, political, and social backdrop during the first half of the 19th century in Denmark. Given the intricate nature of the subject and the

inherent constraints of this dissertation, the objective of the chapter is to offer a concise contextualization of the period in Danish history characterized by significant transformations, and marked by armed conflicts that led Denmark to transition from a culturally diverse and powerful nation to a smaller nation-state. The country not only underwent a diminution in its geographical expanse but also grappled with profound economic challenges. These circumstances precipitated fundamental inquiries into the national identity of the Danish people. Consequently, this section of the thesis furnishes a succinct examination of the concepts of nationality, and explores the prevailing philosophical underpinnings that influenced their development. The principal wellspring of inspiration originated from German Romantic philosophers, whose ideas were then further developed by Danish thinkers such as Henrich Steffens (1773-1845) and Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872). Notably, Grundtvig's role as a poet and advocate of Nordic history and mythology, was instrumental in championing the cause of Denmark's national revival. His efforts included the establishment of folk schools designed to educate the rural population, all of which aligned with a vision for the reinvigoration of Denmark as a nation. It is also worth noting that the question of nationality evolved into a political concern in the late 1830s, especially in the context of the escalating division over the status of Schleswig. During this period, the national-liberal political movement emerged, destined to wield a significant impact on the evolution of the nationality concept — an influence that would resonate in Høyen's approach.

To comprehend the broader changes in political, cultural, and social dimensions, as well as shifts in artistic patronage, particularly in the context of the rise of the bourgeoisie, is crucial for contextualizing Høyen's activities. In a more expansive perspective, the era, despite being marked by crises and conflicts, at the same time is distinguished by an unparalleled flourishing of culture and art. This cultural efflorescence bore significant repercussions on the development of art, the organization of exhibitions, and opening of museums on an unprecedented scale in Denmark. Ultimately, it set the stage for the processes that culminated in the establishment of the National Gallery.

Therefore, the focus of the second chapter, *Danish Museums in the First Half of the 19th Century* is the examination of changes within the field of museology during this period. It initiates with an overview of the transformation of royal collections into publicly accessible museums — a trend that began in the mid-18th century. This shift in understanding of collections, their display, and accessibility was propelled by the changing intellectual climate and the aspirations of the burgeoning European middle class, which sought greater knowledge and

comprehension. Museums, thus, assumed a significant role not only as repositories of objects but also as agents in shaping national identities and narratives. They contributed to presenting cultural heritage and historical artifacts in ways that fostered the cultivation of national identity and historical consciousness. This is exemplified by the illustration of a map of museums in Copenhagen, highlighting the capital's significant contribution to the establishment of new museums, which mostly grew out of royal collections. Among them, the Thorvaldsen Museum stands out as the first museum founded by the state, reflecting a unique committee-based approach that engaged citizens rather than adhering to courtly administration.

During periods of transformation, museums were intended to render the nation-state tangible and foster the cultivation of national identity reflected in art. Within this context, the Royal Picture Gallery, under Høyen's guidance, assumed a central role. In search of particularly important source of inspiration that could have served as a reference for Høyen, the examination of German museums becomes crucial. Although the Louvre undoubtedly provided a model of museum that resonated across Europe, the early German galleries, alongside the discourse surrounding the Berlin museum, played critical role in shaping museum thought in Denmark.

The third chapter, *From the Kunstkammer to the Royal Picture Gallery*, is dedicated to the origins of the Royal Picture Gallery, which originated from the 1650-established Kunstkammer and was later expanded by esteemed art dealers and scholars, Gerhard Morell (1710-1771) and Johan Conrad Spengler (1767-1839). Amidst the latter half of the 18th century, leveraging the paintings amassed within the Kunstkammer, Morell spearheaded the creation of Denmark's first royal gallery of paintings in the Christiansborg Palace, marking a significant milestone in the Danish museum history. Following a comprehensive reorganization, led by J.C. Spengler in the early decades of the 19th century, it was opened to the public as the Royal Picture Gallery in Christiansborg [Kongelige Billedgalleri paa Christiansborg]. While Morell became a key figure in the formation of the royal gallery during the heyday of European collecting, Spengler's contribution laid in the systematic organization and arrangement of the collection, ultimately ensuring its accessibility to a broader audience. Their efforts were thus instrumental in shaping the distinctive character of the royal gallery before the tenure of Niels Laurits Høyen.

Chapter four, titled *Niels Laurits Høyen. Art Historian and Museologist*, delves into two fundamental aspects of Høyen's work. In this chapter, focus lies on examining Høyen's progression as an art historian and critic with an objective to delineate the breadth of his activities, track the development of his research methodologies, and explore the evolution of his

perspectives on art. This investigation ultimately aims to underscore the profound significance of Høyen's concept of national art, a notion that pervaded a substantial portion of his work. Høyen's influence extended beyond directly shaping emerging artists through his lectures; he also set criteria for selecting paintings, especially within the collections under his care. The aim of this chapter is to explore Høyen's contributions to museology before his tenure at the Royal Picture Gallery by tracing his involvement with private collections and the Thorvaldsen Museum — a cornerstone project in Danish museum history during the early 19th century.

The objective of the fifth chapter, *Two Inspectors*, is to outline more detailed background regarding Høyen's involvement within the Royal Picture Gallery. The chapter begins by shedding light on Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788-1865), an archaeologist and museologist, whose role as Høyen's collaborator is often marginalized and underrated. However, understanding Thomsen's contribution becomes essential for a comprehensive grasp of the functioning of the royal collections and the Gallery's origins, as it provides insights into the operational mechanisms and the acquisition policies at play. While Høyen's undeniable impact on the Danish art scene is acknowledged, recognizing his collaboration with Thomsen unveils a more nuanced perspective on the process of shaping the narrative within the Gallery.

The final chapter, *The Origins of the National Gallery of Denmark*, is dedicated to the examination of the Gallery's development during Høyen's tenure from 1839 to 1870, with particular emphasis on the transformative period spanning the 1850s and 1860s, instrumental in shaping the permanent display of Danish art. The chapter commences with an analysis of Høyen's alterations in the Spengler's gallery, regarding the selection, attribution, and arrangement of artworks. Subsequently, the focal point shifts to Høyen's efforts in establishing the exhibition of contemporary Danish painting, and the validation of his theoretical thought in the exhibition practice. Thus, the goal is also to explore the reception of the Gallery and the enduring discourse surrounding Høyen's canon of Danish art, which involves an analysis of ongoing scholarly and curatorial initiatives aimed at reshaping and redefining the canon — a compelling facet that continues to drive scholarly inquiry in contemporary art discourse in Denmark.

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I Time of Transitions. Golden Age Denmark

The homeland is, above all, a landscape.

Krzysztof Pomian [1]

1.1. Mother Denmark

"The national courage, the national enthusiasm and strength, could hardly find any clearer expression than in this […] genuine Danish physiognomy […] which we find in Mrs. Jerichau's picture […]. If it is intended for the national art to have a strengthening effect on the national feeling, Mrs. Jerichau has undoubtedly come closer to the goal than most who anxiously search for the expression of their undetermined longing."[2] In these words *Flyveposten* conveyed profound admiration for the artwork unveiled by Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann (1819-1881), an artist hailing from Warsaw, during the 1851 annual art salon at Charlottenborg, in Copenhagen. Baumann's painting, titled *Mother Denmark*, sparked significant discourse in the Danish art scene, owing to a myriad of compelling factors [fig.1].

Drawing inspiration from the Danish triumph at the Battle of Isted in 1850, Baumann directed her focus towards an allegorical representation of Denmark. She depicted a youthful Nordic woman donning a folk costume, with Viking adornments on her head, holding a Bronze Age sword in her right hand, and the paramount symbol – the Danish flag [Dannebrog] – in her

[1] Krzysztof Pomian, *Drogi kultury europejskiej* (Warszawa: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 1996), 169.

[2] Cit. per.: Sine Krogh, "Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann og den københavnske kunstverden: Konflikter om ideologi, danskhed og (trans)nationalisme i kunsten", *E-Romantikstudier*, no. 7 (2020), 38-39.

left hand.[3] As noted by Inge Adriansen, the portrayal of Denmark as a Valkyrie poised for battle bears striking resemblance to an illustration of Grundtvig's poem which presents the motherland as a harmonious blend of beauty and fortitude strength.[4] At the same time, Baumann's painting transcends mere commemoration of Denmark's triumph in the First Schleswig War (1848-1850) or depiction of a resilient homeland. It also embodies a fascination with Danish folklore, national history, and Norse mythology, thereby aligning with the ongoing processes of constructing national identity in the 19th-century Denmark.

As the image became a reference for subsequent depictions of Mother Denmark and swiftly found its way into broader circulation through reproductions and various forms of applied arts, its trajectory also exemplifies the inherent tensions that defined Danish art scene in the 19th century. According to Sine Krogh, Baumann's adeptness at crafting nationally uplifting imagery can be seen as a strategic maneuver aimed at capturing the attention of the cultural elite, who viewed art as an integral component of a broader national agenda.[5] Despite earning acclaim as a "Danish Artist," as noted in reviews such as those in *Flyveposten*, and her painting being heralded as an ideal representation of the discourse surrounding national identity, it failed to garner appreciation from the era's most influential critic, Niels Laurits Høyen (1798-1870).

His positions in Copenhagen's most significant artistic institutions, direct interactions with artists, and political support within national liberal circles not only underscore Høyen's extensive influence and network but also depth of his impact. All of these factors provided a supportive context for the development of his theory on national art, which directly informed his actions as an museologist. The fact that Høyen held position as the inspector of the Royal Picture

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[3] Baumann could have drawn inspiration from the Ernst von Recke's representation of Mother Denmark from 1813, where a young woman is depicted holding the Danish flag, surrounded by an array of weapons, adorned with a plumed helmet and shield. This depiction might have been familiar through reproductions, as it was replicated, including instances such as its appearance on porcelain items within the collection of the Royal Copenhagen Shooting Society [Kongelige Kjøbenhavnske Skydeselskab og danske Broderskab].
Bumann's painting is also integral to the evolution of national personifications, which emerged in all European nations during the 19th century. While female national allegories can be traced back to Antiquity (such as Roma, Gallia, Germania, etc.), it was during the period of nation-building and the maturation of the national concept that these depictions underwent significant development. See: Michael Wintle, "Personifying the Past: National and European History in the Fine and Applied Arts in the Age of Nationalism," in *Narrating the nation: representations in history, media and the arts*, eds. Stefan Berger, et al. (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Book, 2011), 234.

[4] Inge Adriansen, "Mor Danmark: valkyrie, skjoldmø og fædrelandssymbol," *Folk og Kultur: Årbog for Dansk Etnologi og Folkemindevidenskab*, no. 1 (1987), 119.

[5] Krogh, "Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann," 38-39.

Gallery and had a weighty impact on the selection of artworks for public display meant that primarily artists whose works adhered to his criteria for national art could expect his attention. Hence, given the lack of Danish origin and her association with the Düsseldorf school, Baumann found herself on the opposite end of the artistic standards set by Høyen for national art.[6] As a result, the most renowned Danish painting of its time was never even considered for acquisition by a Royal Picture Gallery in Copenhagen, ultimately finding its place within the European art collection of Carl Jacobsen (1842-1914).

The example of Baumann's work illustrates how the process of shaping Danish national identity, with art playing a central role, was fraught with tensions, particularly heightened by the Danish-German conflict during the strife over Schleswig and Holstein.[7] In conjunction with a series of devastating events within the country, the establishment of the modern Danish nation and nation-state was underscored by a plethora of crises.

During the first half of the 19th century, the Scandinavian region faced the task of reinterpreting its past and fostering a sense of national identities. The Napoleonic Wars and subsequent peace treaties led to major territorial changes, prompting a response also in the cultural policies from the dominant states of Denmark and Sweden. These responses were closely intertwined with the emerging notions of national citizenship in Europe and a new mode of historical consciousness. At the same time, this period posed a formidable challenge in reconciling the diverse heritage within national museums and navigating the complexities of representing a unified national identity.

In case of Denmark, a series of significant events marked a period of drastic transformations. It began with the military conflict with England and the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801, followed by the bombardment of the city by British fleet in 1807. The country's involvement in the military conflicts resulted in a substantial financial strain, and eventually a bankruptcy in 1813. Soon after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Treaty of Kiel in 1814 led to the separation of Norway, and shortly thereafter, of Sweden. Although Holstein remained under Danish sovereignty, nevertheless it became integrated into the German Confederation. This marked a profound shift for Denmark, once a powerful kingdom with Copenhagen as its vibrant center, housing a royal court, main port, administrative hub, academy and university. The series

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[6] Adriansen, "Mor Danmark," 121-122.

[7] See: Uffe Østergård, "Schleswig and Holstein in Danish and German Historiography," in *Disputed Territories and Shared Pasts. Overlapping National Histories in Modern Europe*, eds. Tibor Frank and Frank Hadler (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 200–23.

of defeats and territorial losses transformed Denmark into a peripheral nation-state, not only soundly beaten and stripped of significant territories but also confronted with severe economic crises, compounding the challenges it had to overcome.

The crisis of the early 19th century is also intricately tied to the genesis of what would later be revered as the Danish Golden Age.[8] This designation is often ascribed to the period from around 1800 to approximately 1850, or more precisely culminating in 1848 with the transition from an absolutist to a constitutional monarchy. The underlying rationale for this chronological framework hinges on the notion that Romanticism catalyzed a surge in refined artistic and cultural output.[9] Paradoxically, this timeframe marks a remarkable artistic and literary development, concomitant with a broader advancement in cultural pursuits, closely linked with the ascendancy of a new artistic patronage. Simultaneously, with the Danish bourgeoisie experiencing an unprecedented ascent in influence, the cultural milieu embarked on a resolute trajectory. In Denmark, the evolution of bourgeois democracy, the emergence of the nation-state, and the cultivation of a distinct national consciousness progressed through a symbiotic interplay. The intricate interweaving of these transformative dynamics coalesced into a form of a 'nation-building process', where the delineations between state and nation became merged.

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[8] It was not until 1890 that the Danish philosopher Valdemar Vedel first used the term Golden Age [*Guldalderen*] to describe the period; and 1896 when Danish author Vilhelm Andersen describe the Golden Age and its beginning, which he associated with Henrich Steffens's lectures in Copenhagen.

[9] Peter Nørgaard Larsen, "Entrenchments and Escape Routes: Expressing a Sense of Loss in Danish Art 1848-1864," in *Nineteenth-Century Nationalisms and Emotions in the Baltic Sea Region. The Production of Loss*, eds. Anna Bohlin, et al (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021), 137.

For further exploration of this subject, see also: Peter Nørgaard Larsen, "The Afterlife of the Danish Golden Age c. 1850-75," *Statens Museum for Kunst Journal*, no. 4 (2000); *Danish Golden Age: World-class Art Between Disasters*, ed. Cecilie Høgsbro Østergaard (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst), 2019.

However, the outcomes of recent discussions, particularly those centering around the exhibition "Danish Golden Age: World-class Art Amidst Disasters" held at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen in 2019, have yielded a proposition to extend the notion of the Golden Age period up until 1864. As articulated by Peter Nørgaard Larsen, the dawn of the First Schleswig War inflicted a blow upon Danish culture, but it was the ultimate defeat against Prussia that definitively severed the connection from the culture of homogeneous and shared values that permeated the initial half of the 19th century. The aspirations for a revival of Denmark's glorious past, potentially through the establishment of a Scandinavian union distinctively juxtaposed against the German states, were dashed with Denmark's transformation into even smaller nation-state after 1864. At the same time, prolongation of a temporal framework, as posited by the exhibition curators, facilitates the incorporation of a broader spectrum of artists eligible for inclusion within the Golden Age. This argument is critically examined within the last chapter of this thesis.

Cultural growth in Denmark was primarily propelled by bourgeois circles in Copenhagen, which emerged as a vivid center of artistic production that have later become emblematic of the Golden Age period. Following the alterations prompted by the city's reconstruction after the bombardment, Copenhagen evolved into a remarkable hub for poets, artists, and scientists.[10] The transition from Baroque architecture to the monumental Neoclassical structures designed by Christian Frederik Hansen not only replaced the former aesthetics but also offered an ideal backdrop for the vibrant cultural life of the city. The Danish capital stood out as the core of profound cultural expressions, even if not always originating there, yet ultimately gravitating and coalescing within its boundaries. This exceptional advancement in art, culture, and science spanned the period during which Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) and Bernhard Severin Ingemann (1789-1862) honed their literary contributions, Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger (1779-1850) and Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) crafted their poetic narratives, Hans Christian Ørsted (1777-1851) elucidated his physics, and Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) formulated profound philosophical concepts. It was an epoch distinguished by an unprecedented flourishing of art, as August Bournonville's (1805-1879) ballets came into light, Christoph Ernst Weyse (1774-1842) orchestrated his musical compositions, Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) unveiled his sculptures, and Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783-1853) showcased his paintings. This convergence of artistic and intellectual prowess generated a dynamic cultural pulse that resonated most profoundly, permeating and enriching the entirety of the country.

1.2. Concepts of Nationality

Tensions inherent in the formation of the Golden Age encompassed not solely political or social dimensions, but also extended to the realms of philosophy, aesthetics, and culture. These tensions find resonance also within the context of the history of the Danish nationality, a concept that has evolved gradually since the mid-18th century and reached its zenith in a comprehensive discourse, driven by territorial, political, and social transformations during the first half of the

[10] Henriette Steiner, *The Emergence of a Modern City. Golden Age Copenhagen 1800-1850* (London: Routledge, 2014), 19-20.

19th century.[11] Hans Vammen in his article *National Internationalism — the Danish Golden Age Concepts of Nationality* reconstructs the development of three main concepts of nationality, which he distinguished in connection with the history of ideas as the: Rationalist, Herderian and Hegelian.[12]

Vammen situates the Rationalist notion of the nation in the period preceding the Golden Age, wherein national sentiments are oriented towards the Danish Realm and its monarch. The cultural milieu persists in its adherence to the shared ideological foundation of the European Enlightenment, signifying its cosmopolitan nature, and subsequent conflicts between the King's Danish and German-speaking subjects have no consequences for the culture.[13] This perspective endures beyond the onset of Romanticism in the aftermath of 1800, albeit progressively receding in prominence after the year 1840.

In turn, Johann Gottfried Herder's (17441803) concept of nationality emerged in Denmark with the breakthrough of Romanticism which heralds the integration of German Romantic ideals into the Danish context, set into motion by the lectures delivered in Copenhagen between 1802 and 1803 by Henrich Steffens (1773-1845). Steffens advocated the interconnection of nature, art, science, and history through the conduit of the eternal Spirit (Idea), amalgamating into a singular corpus of universal knowledge. His lectures, influenced also by Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling's (1775-1854) organicist thought, were based on the concept that "every part exists for the whole and the whole for each part; everything from minerals and plants to animals and humans, the historical progress of culture, the geological layers of the earth

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[11] Benedikte Brincker, "A 'Small Great National State': An Analysis of the Cultural and Political Factors that shaped Danish Nationalism 1760–1870", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16, no. 4 (2003), 414-415.

Although scholars like Ole Feldbæk address the emergence of a discourse on the Danish national identity in the mid-18th century, there is a consensus among historians that the period spanning the Napoleonic Wars and the following years, specifically 1815-1848, marked the most significant phase in the evolution of the Danish nationalism.

The literature on Danish nationalism and national identity in the 19th century is extensive. See for example: *Dansk identitetshistorie*, Ole Feldbäk, ed. (Köbenhavn: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1991-1992); Uffe Østergård, "Stat, nation og national identitet," in *Klassik og moderne samfundsteori*, eds. Heine Andersen and Lars Bo Kaspersen (København: Gyldendal, 2020); Rasmus Glenthøj, *På fædrelandets alter. National identitet og patriotisme hos det danske borgerskab 1807-1814*, København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 2017); Palle Christiansen, *Veje til danskheden. Bidrag til moderne nationale selvforståelse* (København: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 2005).

[12] Hans Vammen, "National Internationalism – the Danish Golden Age Concepts of Nationality," *Meddelelser fra Thorvaldsens Museum* (1997), 10.

[13] Ibidem.

and the heavens, are connected by a common spirit."[14] The analogy of an organism redirects focus also towards the individual, therefore "a profound comprehension of the universal is attained by progressively delving into the depths of the individual"; similarly, nations — resembling individuals — establish their distinct identities by fostering a keen awareness of their historical consciousness."[15]

Some of Steffens' ideas were embraced by the attendees of his lectures, including the most prominent poets of the time, such as Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig and Adam Oehlenschläger, whose poem *The Golden Horns* [*Guldhornene*] from 1803, became a breakthrough of Romantic poetry in Denmark. Oehlenschläger gave poetic form to Steffens' organicist thoughts, "lending a voice to nature in his frequent use of anthropomorphism, and providing his own age with a sense of deep connection to a glorious past only waiting to emerge out of the soil."[16] Connection to a glorious past and historical consciousness held significant importance also in the thoughts of Grundtvig, a pastor, author, and philosopher who stood as one of the most influential figures in Danish history.

Grundtvig's perspective diverged from the notion of a Danish nation that required deliberate construction or invention. Instead, he assumed the responsibility of rousing the Danish populace from a centuries-long slumber, rekindling their dormant national consciousness. Inspired by the tenets of German romantic philosophers, particularly Herder, he expounded his belief that a national character is deeply rooted in the Danish people.[17] This inclination is exemplified, for instance, in Grundtvig's unwavering commitment to the Danish language, which he deemed pivotal in nurturing Danish nationalism. Echoing Herder, Grundtvig shared the belief that a nation's spiritual gene code is preserved within its language, and therefore he composed numerous poems extolling the virtues of the Danish language (the most famous of them is *The Name of the Mother is a celestial sound* [*Moders navn er en himmelsk lyd*]).[18]

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[14] Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, "Nordic Nature: From Romantic Nationalism to the Anthropocene," in *Introduction to Nordic Cultures*, eds. Annika Lindskog and Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen (London: UCL Press, 2020), 165-173.

[15] Vammen, "National Internationalism," 10-11.

[16] Stougaard-Nielsen, "Nordic Nature," 165-173.

[17] Brincker, "A Small Great National State," 414-415.

[18] Ibidem.

Another cornerstone concept in Grundtvig's endeavor to shape the national consciousness of the Danish people was his notion of the *Folk* (*Volk*).[19] This perspective illuminated peasants as bearers of freedom and emerged as a crucial element in the process of construction of the national community. He attached particular importance to the peasantry, because in his eyes, in this group one could rediscover the spirit of the people that was essential to the development of the nation.[20] In alignment with this notion, Grundtvig conceived the concept of Danish Folk High Schools, established during the 1840s, which played a crucial role in spreading education conducted in the Danish language. In Grundtvig's perspective, as Benedikte Brincker concludes, "independent peasant was above all an ideal which went hand in hand with his herderian-inspired version of nationalism."[21]

The question of nationality became a political issue at the end of the 1830s, following the deepening division over the status of Schleswig. Referring to the development of the so-called political nationalism, Vammen directs focus towards the division between younger and older national liberal politicians, whose divergent perspectives on nationality are well exemplified through their respective stances on the Schleswig question. While politicians such as Joakim Frederik Schouw (1789-1852), Henrik Nicolai Clausen (1793-1877), and Lauritz Nicolai Hvidt (1777-1856) acknowledged German claims in Schleswig and advocated for a division along linguistic lines, a group of younger politicians, led by Orla Lehmann (1810-1870) and Ditlev Gothard Monrad (1811-1887), placed greater emphasis on the state's historical rights rather than the principle of national self-determination, and pursued the establishment of a constitution encompassing the entirety of Schleswig.[22] In their concept of nationality, the younger national liberals did not support the idea of a single individual as the source for universal insight.[23] Their

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[19] Stefan Berger, *The search for Normality. National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (New York-Oxford: Berghahn, 1997), 24.
Grundtvig's idea of *folkeanden* is a reflection of Herder's *Volksgeist*. Herder's concepts of the people [*Volk*], constituting a 'community of blood' [*Blutsgemeinschaft*], and the 'national spirit' [*Volksgeist*] as distinctive historical individuality, were especially influential and impacted subsequent generations of historians. According to Herder, nationalism scarcely pertains to the state, let alone politics or citizenship. Nations existed prior to political formation and their foundations were grounded in culture, language, and ethnicity

[20] Brincker, "A Small Great National State," 414-415.

[21] Ibidem.

[22] Vammen, "National Internationalism," 12.

[23] Ibidem.

inspiration, drawn from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's (1770-1831) concepts, was particularly centered on his notions regarding the Spirit that permeates history, and the evolution of the Spirit's self-consciousness along with the historical progress towards realization of the awareness of freedom. As noted by Karina Lykke and Gertrud Oelsner, this inspiration might be exemplified in the speeches of Lehmann, who claimed that the Danish nation has attained a level of consciousness that warrants the pursuit of political liberty and the prerogative to jointly determine the trajectory of the community's destiny.[24]

National-liberal politicians often served as patrons for artists, and it was within these spheres that the conceptual framework emerged for artists seeking to channel the political and cultural idea of the nation in the new direction.[25] This garnered support from figures like Lehmann in political circles, while in the realm of art, it was dictated by Niels Laurits Høyen.

1.3. National Romanticism in Danish Culture

Rooted in Grundtvig's perception of culture, the objective was to reestablish national identity through the medium of historical novels, national poetry and songs, folk culture, and expansive scope of artistic creation, funded by the Danish bourgeoisie. This wave of National Romanticism found its dissemination through the ideas espoused by Grundtvig, as well as the poetic works of Oehlenschläger and Ingemann, who emphasized the innate splendor of Denmark.[26] It was also manifested within the concept of a "Nordic tone" in music, or in theater, which served as the arena where cultural and political power struggles unfolded. The tension between authoritarianism and the aristocracy on the one hand, and the emerging bourgeoisie on the other, was discernible within the repertoire of the Royal Theater [Det Kongelige Teater], where dramas by Oehlenschläger, Ingemann or Henrik Hertz (1797-1870), set within bourgeois contexts, were increasingly staged.[27]

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[24] Karina Lykke Grand, Gertrud Oelsner, "Politisering af det nationale? Billedkunstneriske og politiske agendaer omkring midten af 1800-tallet i Danmark," *Passepartout*, no. 35 (2014), 80-81.

[25] Ibidem.

[26] Oehlenschläger's poem from 1823, *This is a beautiful country* [*Det er et yndigt land*], became the national anthem of Denmark in the 1920s.

[27] Jens Engberg, "Magten og Kulturen. Dansk Kulturpolitik 1750-1900," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 107, no. 2 (2007), 244-245.

Another manifestation took the form of keen interest in history and mythology, with a particular emphasis on everything perceived as Old Norse, that could serve as a foundational backdrop for a modern Danish culture. This also resulted in a burgeoning interest in archaeology, particularly in the exploration of ancient grave mounds or runestones, which prompted figures like Oehlenschläger, Grundtvig, Høyen, or painters like Johan Thomas Lundbye (1818-1848) to embark on journeys across Denmark.[28] Preoccupation with mythology took center stage in history painting, undergoing significant growth in the early years of the 19th century, to gradually give way to the emergence of genre and landscape painting in the ensuing decades. In particular demand were history paintings that depicted mythical and historical events from the nation's past, thus celebrating the nation's accomplishments, endurance, and heroic actions (such as Christian August Lorentzen's *Danish flag falling from the sky during the battle of Lyndanise in 1219*, 1809).[29]

In Grundtvig's perspective, Nordic mythology was inextricably woven into the contemplation of not only glorious historical past of the Danish nation but also shared historical

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[28] Robert William Rix, "Visiting the Nordic Past: Domestic Travels in Early Nineteenth-Century Denmark," *Scandinavian Studies* 90, no. 2 (2018), 211-236.
Artists like Lundbye, Købke, Sonne, Marstrand and Roed attended N.L Høyen's lectures on Norse mythology. Based on Høyen's lecture notes form the Royal Library, it can be concluded that he dedicated a series of lectures to the Nordic sagas.

[29] Marianne Rostgaard, "Denmark," in *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview*, eds. Guntram Herb and David Kaplan (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 154.
Artists seeking admission to the Academy were assigned subjects derived from Norse mythology. Already C.W. Eckersberg, when admitted to the Academy in 1803 had to present a topic of such nature. See: Kasper Monrad, *Dansk Guldalder. Lyset, landskabet og hverdagslivet* (København: Gyldendal, 2013).

narrative of the wider Scandinavian region.[30] As such, it assumed a significant role within the overarching historiosophical framework of the North's renaissance. This conceptualization was linked with the evolving concept of Scandinavianism, which initially denoted a historical, cultural, and linguistic cohesion among the Scandinavian countries. In a response to tensions with Germany over the borderlands of Schleswig and Holstein, this notion matured into a comprehensive political agenda. That coincided with the blossoming of Romantic Nordic nationalism throughout the Scandinavian region, setting the stage for engagements such as the Swedish king's pledge to support Denmark by aligning his army with the Danes in the event of a conflict with Prussia.[31] However, in 1864, despite the king's renewed commitments to provide military aid, parliamentary backing for such actions diminished. This occurrence struck a notable blow to Scandinavian political ambitions, highlighting a setback in the joint endeavor to nurture a unified Nordic identity and establish common political objectives among the Nordic nations.[32]

Eventually, mythological subjects, and historical painting in general, gradually yielded ground to landscape, which gained momentum from the 1840s onward and assumed a more expansive significance. In the Romantic notion, emphasis was placed on delineating the nation's geographical boundaries, resulting in the landscape itself being nationalized. The term "fatherland" encompassed various local and regional senses of belonging, harmonizing them with the burgeoning focus on national identity and national historical narratives.[33] Within the

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[30] During the 19th century, a prevailing nationalist sentiment characterized each Nordic country. However, it is important to note that this nationalist discourse often remained intertwined with a broader focus on the Nordic region as a whole. Despite the tensions arising from Denmark's loss of Norway and Norway's subsequent forced union with Sweden (which endured until 1905) along with Denmark's defeat in 1864, the nationalist discourse continued to flourish and ultimately fostered the development of shared strategies. As an exemplification may serve such common initiatives as organization in Copenhagen, in 1888, the Nordic Exhibition of Industry, Agriculture and Art [Den Nordiske Industri, Landbrugs og Kunstudstilling i København]. See: Jorn Guldberg, "A Danish spectacle: Balancing national interests at the 1888 Nordic Exhibition of Industry, Agriculture, and Art in Copenhagen," in *Expanding nationalisms at World's fairs: Identity, diversity, and change, 1852-1915*, eds. David Raizman and Ethan Robey (London: Routledge 2017).
On the concept of Norden, see: *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, eds. Bo Stråth and Øystein Sørensen (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997); *Performing Nordic Heritage. Everyday Practices and Institutional Culture*, eds. Peter Aronsson and Lizette Gradén (Burllington, VT: Ashgate, 2013); Mette Sandbye, "The New Nordic? A critical examination," *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* 8, no. 1 (2016).

[31] Stefan Berger, "Nordic National Histories in Comparative European Perspective," *Historik tidsskrift*, no. 1 (2016), 76.

[32] Ibidem.

[33] Ibidem, 73.

redefined concept of Danish identity, cherished symbols encompassed not only historical figures but also the language and, notably, the land, which in this context refers to the landscape.[34] In 19th-century though, the homeland primarily represents a territory shared by the nation. However, as Krzysztof Pomian aptly points out, when defining the nation, the focus shifts from borders, which are more closely tied to the concept of political organization, to features such as landscape.[35] In essence, to use the words of Pomian, the homeland is, above all, a landscape; not solely a product of nature but also an outcome shaped by preceding epochs.[36]

The role of landscape proved essential in creating cultural memory through the power of images, and in this sense was central in the formation of national identities, including the Nordic region. Originating from the impetus driven by advancements in geology and drawing inspiration from natural philosophy — as introduced in Denmark by Steffens — both poets and painters "began to re-imagine the natural world and Nordic spaces as particular landscapes in order to forge national identities and belonging in an age of European political upheavals."[37] Danish artists, like Lundbye or Peter Christian Skovgaard, following Høyen's lectures, wherein he imparted guidance on selecting motifs reflective of Danish essence, depicted landscapes that were recognized as emblematic and distinctive to the nation, which "not only promised to connect the present to a deep national history, but also to produce new cultural memories for a future more self-conscious nation."[38]

As articulated by Simon Schama, "inherited landscape myths and memories share two common characteristics: their surprising endurance through the centuries and their power to shape institutions […]. National identity […] would lose much of its ferocious enchantment without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition: its topography mapped, elaborated, and enriched as a homeland."[39] The recognition of this formidable influence becomes evident in the construct of Danish national art formed by Høyen, whose conceptual framework wielded a tangible influence over the trajectory of Danish art's evolution during the 19th century, thereby substantiating its significance.

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[34] Rostgaard, "Denmark," 154.

[35] Pomian, *Drogi kultury europejskiej*, 169.

[36] Ibidem.

[37] Stougaard-Nielsen, "Nordic Nature," 167.

[38] Ibidem, 172.

[39] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 15.

Fig. 1

Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann, *Mother Denmark*, 1851, oil on canvas, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek

II Danish Museums in the First Half of the 19th Century

2.1. From Wonder to Sign. Transformations of Museums in 19th-Century Europe

In the middle decades of the 18th century, royal, princely, and private collections across Europe began to draw back the veils of exclusivity, gradually opening to a broader public, which led to a great transformation in their character and established practices. As a result of this shift, numerous collections, often rooted in the tradition of Kunstkammer, evolved into modern museums. In the following century, changes continued with unwavering ambition. The grand vision was to weave a profound tapestry of cultural identity and heritage, uniting the entire nation. These nascent modern museums evolved further, their aspirations soaring high as they sought to embody the spirit of the people and nurture a collective sense of belonging—a profound testament to the power of art to bind a nation together.

The transformation of royal art collections into public museums should be perceived as a pivotal milestone in a larger historical narrative, one that reflects the changing dynamics of societies and their evolving perceptions of art and culture. As Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach notes, although public art museum as a new institution would "inherit some of the basic ceremonial functions of the princely collection from which it arose […], under the pressure of new historical forces, those ceremonial functions would be reshaped and redefined, and eventually the public art museum would develop its own distinctive forms and its own characteristic look."[1]

The shift from Kunstkammer to museum, or from a wonder to a sign, to use the words of Jonah Siegel, was fundamentally driven by a change of aspiration.[2] The mission of the public art museums established in the 19th century went beyond merely presenting the taste of the ruling monarchs, as their primary purpose was to showcase and promote the cultural and artistic

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[1] Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History* 3, no. 4 (1980), 452.

The impact of architecture is also of considerable significance in this context, as the first national museums were often established within the structures of royal residences, and their interior decoration bore resemblance to palatial aesthetics. This observation applies also to the Royal Picture Gallery in Copenhagen.

[2] Jonah Siegel, "Introduction," in *The Emergence of the Modern Musem. An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Sources*, ed. J. Siegel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

heritage of the nation itself. A mounting belief emerged that museums, alongside state schools and libraries, should contribute to the moral and intellectual development of all classes of the society and the formation of a common principles of taste.[3] As custodians of the nation's cultural wealth, museums bore witness not to the power of individual rulers, but to the collective strength and identity of the entire nation. Their emergence and development were deeply intertwined with the philosophical, scientific, social, and political discourses of the era.

At the very beginning, the responsibility for the collections was entrusted to the same class of advisors and art dealers that had helped to form them, giving rise to the precursors of the modern museum curators.[4] Opened to the public, royal collections slowly came to be seen as national patrimony, and their display became a public concern, overseen by commissions comprising state officials and experts, with guidelines for the presentation based on both scientific and artistic criteria.[5] The institutionalization of art collections advanced, introducing specific expectations and requiring fulfillment of distinct social and political roles. As a result, museums took on a new dimension, not only offering another perspective on art but also serving as a platform for the reevaluation of art's socio-political function. The transformation of museums represented therefore a profound shift in their purpose, as they evolved from elite repositories of cultural artifacts to educational institutions, serving broader public and playing an essential role in promoting intellectual growth and social consciousness.[6] The educational role, preservation of heritage, and the endeavor to make collections accessible to the public were further augmented by the display of cultural aspirations and political ambitions of states to both citizens and foreigners.[7] Given the fact that the public museum, the nation-state and the modern notion of culture arose together, museum's function was to provide a space that embodied the

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[3] Andrew McClellan, "A Brief History of the Art Museum Public," in *Art and its Publics Museum Studies at the Millennium*, ed. A. McClellan (Oxford & Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 162.

[4] Ibidem.

[5] Elisabeth Weisser-Lohmann, "Das Nationalmuseum – Konzeptionen um 1800," in *Kunst als Kulturgut. Band II. „Kunst" und „Staat,"* eds. E. Weisser-Lohmann, et al. (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2011), 12.

[6] Ibidem.

These fundamental transitions, part and parcel of the evolution towards modern nationalism, occurred at different rates in different countries, but the crucial moment was undoubtedly the French Revolution and the creation of the Louvre as a durable model for the public museum in Europe.

[7] Carole Paul, "Preface: Toward a collective history," in *The first modern museums of art: the birth of an institution in 18th- and early-19th-century Europe*, ed. C. Paul (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), 10-11.

ideals of unity and autonomy, serving both as an example and a model of imagined national unity.[8]

The birth of museum as a public institution, delineated by considerations of accessibility and ownership, coincided with a crisis of power and a simultaneous rise of the notion of a common good and political sovereignty that emerged in the mid-seventeenth century. Thus, it is unsurprising that these deliberations expanded to encompass the ownership and use of cultural heritage, as concepts that influenced the varied objectives of individuals across Europe, all concerned with the inheritance of collections by succeeding generations and the potential that such actions offered.[9] As emphasized by Duncan in a seminal essay *The Art Museum As Ritual* — which delineates the act of visiting a museum as a civic ritual emblematic of a democratic nation-state — it becomes clear that to control a museum means "to control the representation of a community and its highest values and truths."[10] For this reason, museums were susceptible to becoming focal points of intense contention and fervent discourse. Choices concerning displayed artifacts and those omitted, the circumstances dictating their presentation, and the individuals or entities entrusted with an authoritative role in these decisions, are inextricably linked to broader inquiries on "who constitutes the community and who defines its identity."[11] Gaining an understanding of the intricate interplay among museums, dynamics of power, and cultural heritage proves essential in comprehending their enduring significance in shaping societies and their identities.

Thus, examining museums through the lens of research on the institutionalization of culture, as articulated by Dominique Poulot, reveals them as an ideal field for investigating the institutional dynamics of nationalism.[12] In this context, delving into the history of museums and collections, as well as the display and use of objects, offers insights that extend beyond uncovering the intellectual and institutional imprints of their respective pasts. It also sheds light

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[8] Donald Preziosi, "Art History and Museology: Rendering the Visible Legible," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Oxford & Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 50.

[9] Jeffrey Abt, "The Origins of the Public Museum," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald, 123.

[10] Carol Duncan, "The Art Museum As Ritual," in *The Art Of Art History A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 425.

[11] Ibidem.

[12] Dominique Poulot, "Another History of Museums: from the Discourse to the Museum-Piece", *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material* 21, no. 1 (2013), 29.

on the mechanisms that play a significant role in the construction of overarching national narratives. An especially captivating illustration of it in the Scandinavian region will be observed in the context of the establishment of the National Gallery of Denmark.

2.1.1. Public and Display

Placing royal collections in a public context required a fundamental redefinition of their arrangement, space and role of the objects within. The transformation of museums involved not only the physical relocation of the collections but also a profound shift in the principles governing their display and function.[13] In the Louvre, for instance, the development of display basis, which grouped works of art according to national schools and art-historical periods, was instrumental in reshaping the exhibition space to reflect the visibility of the French Republic in two primary ways: firstly, the art objects were no longer merely displayed as symbols of wealth and splendor associated with the ancien regime, but conveyed spiritual value, embodied the national genius and reflected glory of French art; secondly the visitor's role was redefined as that of an idealized citizen of the state, who was no longer a guest of the prince but rather the recipient of the nation's profound achievements and the beneficiary of the state's ideals of democracy.[14]

In the realm of the public domain, the work of art assumes a profound role as the medium through which the intricate interplay between the individual as a citizen and the state found expression. Once considered emblems of opulence adorning the resplendent galleries of princely collections, within the museum's embrace, these erstwhile treasures metamorphosed into objects of art history, repositories of spiritual affluence, and testimonies to the genius of both the individual and the collective nation. As Carol Duncan notes, "the museum context is, in this sense, a powerful transformer: it converts what was once displays of material wealth and social status into displays of spiritual wealth."[15] At the same time, new public art museums sought to

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[13] Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity. Art galleries and the making of modern culture* (Oxford-New York: Berg, 2002), 33.

[14] Ibidem, 46.

[15] Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," in *Exhibiting cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display*, eds. Steven Lavine and Ivan Karp (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 94-95.

align with the intellectual aspirations of the burgeoning European middle class, driven by a desire for enhanced knowledge and comprehension.

The endeavor to forge a cohesive national identity among the citizens of a modern state through the public exhibition of the royal collections, demanded a fundamental reconfiguration of the way that art was exhibited and perceived. In this pursuit, art historians and custodians assumed central role, shaping the museum's displays according to the Enlightenment ideas. One of the earliest examples is the arrangement of the royal collection in Belvedere, where paintings were categorized into distinct national schools, each assigned to understated yet uniform frames, and accompanied by lucid labeling. As Duncan summarized, "a walk through the gallery was an organized walk through the history of art. In other words, the royal collection was organized into a new iconographic programme".[16]

The organization of museum collection according to national schools and picture suspension systems, as highlighted by Poulot, established *de facto* their nationalization.[17] Both Poulot's essays and the insightful analyses of the Viennese gallery by Debora Meijers unveil that even though the focus was on stylistic categories rather than geographical provenance, or on the division of national collections into two parts — one reserved for the national school, the other for foreign schools — the national qualities were subject to comparisons and hierarchical judgments.[18] During the 19th century, these tendencies were reinforced by official declarations, for instance, a decree that established the Royal Museum of Art in Brussels as a place exclusively devoted to the most eminent Belgian painters, sculptors, engravers, and architects.[19] Museums were engaged in a process of "nationalizing" historical artworks and objects to conform to a curated vision of the past. This is evident in cases such as Brussels, where efforts were made to match the Flemish school with the so-called Belgian school, achieved by including

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[16] Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," 455.

[17] Dominique Poulot, "The changing roles of art museums," in *National museums and nation building in Europe 1750-2019. Mobilization and legitimacy, continuity and change*, eds. Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius (London: Routledge, 2015), 99.

[18] Ibidem.

On Debora Meijers remarks to the Vienna gallery, see subchapter *Towards a Visible History of Art. The Impact of German Museums* in this thesis.

[19] Dominique Poulot, "Preface. Uses of the Past: Historical Narratives and the Museum," in *Great Narratives of the Past Traditions and Revisions in National Museums*, eds. D. Poulot, et al. (Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012), 1-8.

artists like Van Eyck or Rubens within the national narrative.[20] Thus, the 19th century witnessed, in the words of Donald Preziosi, a transformation in which "museum objects became windows or perspectives through which complex historical evolutions of attitudes, values, styles, or societies could be observed; museums likely served as significant evolutionary paradigms for the history of art and the development of modern nation-states. These institutions not only exhibited objects but also contributed to shaping national identities and narratives through the presentation of cultural heritage and historical artifacts."[21]

Ultimately, alongside considerations regarding selection and display of objects, architectural design, and decorative arrangements, the examination of the early 19th-century museums demands an equally essential exploration of the mechanisms associated with access and audience engagement.

Art collections and museums had already opened their doors to the public in the 18th century, although the extent of accessibility varied. While the public had access to the collections in Rome or Madrid, where anyone could see royal art treadles in Escorial, French royal collections maintained a policy of limiting public access until the mid-century. It was only after a public petition that a change occurred, prompting the Palace of Versailles to make a part of its collection accessible to the public.[22] In Vienna, in turn, groups of visitors who wished to tour the Imperial Gallery were expected to compensate the custodian with 12 guilders. Interestingly, as a broader range of visitors began to clamor for access to these collections, the resistance did not arise from the owners themselves, but rather from the custodians, who perceived this burgeoning demand as a potential threat to their incomes.[23]

During the 19th century, a significant paradigm shift occurred, wherein visitors were granted admission not merely as a privilege, but as a fundamental right. One of the founding principles of the newly established museums became their openness to the public, encompassing all visitors. According to Andrew McClellan, "with the gradual integration of museums into the cultural apparatus of the modern state, the question of the public became not so much who was admitted, for in time virtually all were welcome, but how museums could be called upon to

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[20] Ibidem.

[21] Preziosi, *Art History and Museology*, 52-53.

[22] Kenneth Hudson, *A Social History of Museums: what the visitors thought* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 4-6.

[23] Ibidem.

shape the public in keeping with the perceived political and social needs."[24] Nonetheless, even though museum audience was frequently depicted as an idealized reflection of the aspirations harbored by liberal politicians and social commentators, it was not uncommon that the declarations which underpinned the official discourse on the museum's intentions toward its visitors, predicates more than what was actually observed in reality.[25]

The process of opening museums and the aforementioned shaping of the public occurred gradually and with varying degrees of success. Commencing with the practical aspect of access, it becomes apparent that entry was frequently subject to regulatory constraints and limitations. Examples abound, including specified days of the week and designated hours delineating accessibility, as observed in the instance of the Luxembourg Gallery, which was open two days a week. Additionally, the prospect of admission was frequently contingent upon the payment of an entrance fee, like at the Copenhagen Gallery. Beyond the realm of entry, transformations extended to the overall arrangement and the array of exhibited objects. This further unveils an additional impetus driving the museums' alignment with evolving anticipations. Namely, the authority of musem directors and inspectors, who played a main role in making critical determinations regarding selection of works and display methodologies, the inclusion and exclusion of objects and narratives. Museum inspectors — aforetime art dealers and painters, then more often art historians — not only undertook the tasks of attribution, authentication, display, and preservation of artworks, but also assume the responsibility of formulating the main narrative that shapes the organization of collections. In this regard, museums often become a field of discussion and clashes for the dominant voice.

The Gallery in Copenhagen, which will be in the focal point of further examinations, provides notably intriguing instances as it holds heightened significance due to the convergence of events: the initiatives undertaken by N.L. Høyen, who served as the catalyst for the evolution of the Royal Gallery into a display representative of the nation, in accordance with the shift from

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[24] McClellan, "A Brief History of the Art,", 162.

[25] Ibidem.

In fact, it was quite common to encounter attitudes similar to those presented by director of the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, Gustav Waagen at the occasion of his visit to the National Gallery in London in 1853. Although Waagen acknowledged that "as a Gallery is erected at the Nation's expense, it must of course be rendered as generally useful as possible**,** everyone being admitted capable of deriving from it enjoyment or instruction"; however "everyone" did not include those "whose dress is so dirty as to create a smell obnoxious to the other visitors" or "babies in arms escorted by their wet nurses", as these groups were rather abundant at London's National Gallery, leading him to leave the building "more than once."

an absolute monarchy to the constitutional order. The transition of the Royal Gallery into a national entity became imperative, and central to this process was the role of gallery inspectors, whose voice assumed the mantle of representing the state. Along with the changes, a struggle unfolded over the shape of the gallery and displayed works. Amidst this dynamic, a palpable tension emerged due to the simultaneous involvement in purchasing works of both parties, the monarch and the inspector. Thus the gallery became a field for displaying artworks selected by the art historian, while the acquisitions made by the king frequently found themselves relegated to storage.

2.1.2. Public Museums in Denmark

"It might appear that a foreign art enthusiast visiting Copenhagen in the early 19th century could have witnessed a plethora of artistic endeavors, since there was the Academy of Fine Arts active from 1745, which under the leadership of Juel and Abildgaard, gained a reputation among northern European art schools. However, as even royal patronage could not secure the institution's finances, in the period from 1769 to 1840 only five actual salons were held. […] Copenhagen as a city of museums was an equally sad chapter. The royal painting collection shared space with the Kunstkammer's diverse rarities, and it was not until 1842 that a proper hanging was accomplished by N. L. Høyen. Furthermore, numerous third-rate pictures were flaunted with such magnificent names that a visitor could have good reason to wonder about the gullibility of the Danes. And private collections? From 1804 and 1806, respectively, access was granted to the Moltke's paintings and the Consul West's collection."[26]

Niels Lindtner's critique review of the map of museums in 19th-century Copenhagen certainly fails to leave a favourable impression. Although its accuracy with regards to the art collections is acknowledged, the map falls short of providing a comprehensive portrayal of the museum landscape within the Danish capital. While this thesis primarily concentrates on the National Gallery of Denmark, a concise survey of a broader context concerning the origins and evolution of Denmark's first public museums will enhance comprehension of the underlying mechanisms that facilitated the establishment of these facilities, including the National Gallery.

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[26] Niels Lindtner, "Kritik og publikum," in *Guldalderen i dansk kunst*, ed. Bo Lindwall (København: Gyldendal, 1964), 137.

At the same time, it cannot be asserted that there was a lack of interest in art, as evidenced by the fact that the Salon in 1794 drew 25,000 visitors, a quarter of Copenhagen's population at that time.

Similarly to other European countries, Denmark's national museums emerged from royal collections, that progressively became accessible to the public from the onset of the 19th century. Thus, during the early years of the century two substantial collections were available for public in Copenhagen, albeit not yet under a comprehensive open-door policy: the Kunstkammer and the Royal Museum of Northern Antiquities [Det Kgl. Museum for Nordiske Oldsager]. While the collection of paintings accommodated at the Kunstkammer, subsequently formed the nucleus of the Royal Picture Gallery, the Museum of Northern Antiquities developed into the cornerstone of the Danish National Museum.[27]

The impulse behind establishment and progression of institutions that served as the foundational elements for subsequent national museums stemmed from the king's appointment of the Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities [Den kongelige Kommission til Oldsagers Opbevaring] in 1807. The primary task of the commission was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all royal collections. As a consequence, the commission's secretary, Danish archaeologist, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788-1865), undertook the initiative to establish the Museum of Northern Antiquities, which served as an early laboratory for an innovative museological experience in Denmark, thereby establishing a pivotal foundation for a scientific and cultural discourse. Founded upon archaeological collections, the museum was opened to the public in 1819 with Thomsen as its director. According to the museum's guide from 1836, Thomsen implemented a presentation framework rooted in his research, namely the tripartite system classifying prehistory into the Stone, Bronze, and Iron ages.[28] The approach employed for categorizing the museum's archaeological collection focused on the differentiation of artifacts based on their material composition, and the three distinct groupings symbolized three chronologically successive archaeological periods presented in the display. Thus, the ideal was, in the words of Thomsen, to enable the visitor to study the nation's cultural development.[29] Thomsen's perspective, which prioritized material culture, subsequently evolved into a guiding

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[27] The collection of the Museum of Northern Antiquities was transferred in 1853 to the Prince's Mansion [Prinsens Palæ] at the Frederiksholms Kanal in Copenhagen, where it still remains today as a part of the National Museum of Denmark [Nationalmuseet].

[28] Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed* (Kjöbenhavn: S. L. Møllers bogtr, 1836), 1-32.

[29] Mogens Bencard, "The Royal Danish Collections at Rosenborg," *The International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, no. 3 (1984), p. 225.

principle within Nordic archaeology for several generations.[30] Thomsen's conceptualization of the museum was emblematic of the Golden Age evolutionism. The organization of his collection mirrored his inherent evolutionary notions, which posited that human development unfolded through analogous stages across the globe. His museum garnered remarkable popularity among the public and earned a reputation that extended well beyond the borders of Denmark.

Thomsen was also engaged in the organization of other specialized collections derived from the remnants of the royal assemblage, contributing to the establishment of museums with diverse focuses. In this vein, the establishment of the Historical Collection of Armor [Den Historiske Våbensamling] took place in 1828, subsequently becoming the cornerstone of the current Royal Arsenal Museum [Tøjhusmuseet]. Subsequently, Thomsen's efforts in 1841 led to the inception of the ethnographic museum, which eventually installed residence in the Prince's Mansion (where a department of the National Museum is located up to this day).[31]

The remaining royal collections were allocated to various residences, with pronounced attention being directed towards the Rosenborg Palace and the Frederiksborg Castle. In the 1830s, transformation occurred within the Rosenborg, wherein the assortments of items belonging to successive rulers — including crown jewels, furniture, or tapestries — were transferred into a historical museum of the Danish dynasties. Royal chambers, adorned with comprehensive furnishings, mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries, were arranged with a dual purpose: to provide a sequential panorama of royal generations and simultaneously encapsulate the narrative of Danish history. Following its public inauguration in 1838, the museum's presentation offered an overview through the chronicles of the Royal Family, spanning from the era of Christian IV to the modern times. The leading spirit behind this undertaking was also Thomsen, who created at the Rosenborg the first chronologically arranged historical museum in Europe.[32] Notably, the rich royal collection at Rosenborg still adheres, in principle, to the scheme established during the 1830s.

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[30] Henrik Zipsane, "National museums in Denmark," in *Building National museums and nation building in Europe 1750-2019. Mobilization and legitimacy, continuity and change*, eds. Peter Aronsson, Gabriella Elgenius (London: Routledge, 2015), 215-16.
This museum was merged with three other collections (ethnographic, antiquities, and numismatic) in 1892 to form the National Museum of Denmark.

[31] Gudmund Boesen, *Danish Museums* (Copenhagen: Det Berlingske Bogtrykkeri, 1966), 10-12.

[32] Bencard, "The Royal Danish Collections," 227.

The establishment of the chronologically arranged Rosenborg collection, found robust advocacy from the Lord Chamberlain, Adam Wilhelm Hauch (1755-1838), a natural scientist turned courtier, who in 1812 ardently championed alterations also in the collection housed within the Frederiksborg Castle. In accordance with his concept, Frederiksborg was designated to accommodate the royal portrait collection, arrayed in a seamless chronological sequence. This arrangement was intended to illuminate the junctures in the nation's history, thereby unfolding a compelling historical narrative through a meticulous succession of significant events. While the formal establishment of the museum at Frederiksborg Castle took place in 1878 (now known as the Museum of National History at Frederiksborg Castle [Det Nationalhistoriske Museum på Frederiksborg Slot]), it was notably N.L. Høyen's pioneering efforts in the 1830s that laid the groundwork for the meticulous arrangement of Denmark's most extensive portrait collection.[33]

Alongside the substantial reorganization of royal holdings into structured and thematically segmented collections, the evolution of publicly accessible museums in the Danish capital in the first half of the 19th century was punctuated by another noteworthy initiative. This involved the most famous Danish sculptor, Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844), who in 1838 generously donated a major part of his artworks and personal art collection to his hometown of Copenhagen. In the years 1839-1849, dedicated efforts were undertaken to establish a museum to accommodate Thorvaldsen's collection, preceded by a public discourse upon its intended purpose, structural organization, and architectural design. N.L Høyen wrote about the museum in 1837, before Thorvaldsen's final decision, during a period characterized by ongoing discussions on the fate of his collections: "in its halls, the famous name of the artist, the national feelings and the admiration of foreigners will strongly support the effect of his masterpieces, and the eye will be opened to the rich enjoyment and education that goes hand in hand with art."[34] The Thorvaldsen Museum was not solely envisioned as the first public museum in Denmark that diverged from reliance on the former royal collection, but also as a symbolic representation of a new era.

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[33] Francis Beckett, *Frederiksborg. Nationalhistoriske Museum på Frederiksborg* (København: Hagerup, 1914), 2:227-236.

More on Høyen's engagement at Frederiksborg is elaborated in the chapter IV of this thesis dedicated to his role as a museologist.

[34] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Om Thorvaldsen og hans Museum, i Anledning a f den udstedte Indbydelse," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter*, ed. Johan Louis Ussing (København: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1871), 1:306.

The commission entrusted with the establishment of the museum by the city authorities opted to embrace the design proposed by Gottlieb Bindesbøll (1800-1856). The construction took place on the grounds of the royal carriage house, which was bestowed by the king, and its funding was sourced from a public fundraising. The opening date of the museum was also symbolic, as it coincided with significant events of 1848, such as the elections to the Legislative Assembly, impending introduction of the Danish constitution in the following year, and the signing of an armistice in the war with Prussia. Not less symbolic was the museum's location, in close proximity to the primary royal residence of Christiansborg, where, as a consequence of state reforms, the parliament was slated to convene. The frieze on the museum façade by Jørgen Sonne (1801-1890), crafted between 1846 and 1850, which portrayed Thorvaldsen's return to Copenhagen in 1838, depicted influential citizens of Copenhagen, while intentionally shunning the king [fig. 2].[35]

The first four decades of the 19th century in Denmark marked a phase of substantial transformations, wherein the scattered royal collections were scholarly converted into the foundational components of national museums, and opened to the general public. These developments unfolded against the backdrop of significant political occurrences that culminated in the dissolution of absolutism and the implementation of the constitution in 1849. As a consequence of these changes, royal residences and art collections were transferred to state ownership. Throughout these transformative processes, museums were driven by the aspiration to render the nation-state tangible and to foster the cultivation of national identity. The Royal Picture Gallery, under the guidance of N.L. Høyen, was assigned a distinctive role in this venture.

[35] Hans Dam Christensen, "Kritiske betragtninger over Thorvaldsens Museum som tegn," in *Meddelelser fra Thorvaldsens Museum* (1998), 148-155.

2.2. Towards a Visible History of Art. The Impact of German Museums

I live in the same city as Goethe! I'll hear him talk tomorrow.
Believe me, a strange feeling flows through me, I am so calm,
so happy, and yet so longing, in such great tension.

Niels Laurits Høyen[36]

2.2.1. Niels Laurits Høyen and Germany

In September 1822, young Danish scholar, Niels Laurits Høyen, embarked on his first trip abroad. While his ultimate destination was Italy, his prolonged stay in Germany between 1822 and 1823 proved to be pivotal in shaping his perspectives as an art historian and future museologist. In Germany, Høyen witnessed the construction of the Glyptotheque in Munich, examined the Boisserée collection in Stuttgart and art collections in Berlin; he toured artists' studios in Dresden, encountered Rumohr in Lübeck, and had a brief meeting with Goethe in Weimar in 1823 (with whom he engaged in a discussion concerning the challenges of studying history of art).[37] Following Leo Swane's words, "it must have been of great importance to Høyen where he received his first impressions on art. This importance pertains not only to the museums

[36] Rejsebreve fra N.L. Høyen til forældrene og hustruen, Håndskriftsamlingen, NKS 2385 kvart, Royal Danish Library.

[37] Britta Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer to art museum, exhibiting and cataloguing art in the royal collections in Copenhagen, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*, PhD dissertation (London: Courtland Institute of Art, 2004), 94-96. See also: Johan Louis Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned, med Bilag af Breve* (Kjøbenhavn: Samfundet til den danske Litteraturs Fremme, 1872), 32-33.
Høyen described various places and people within his comprehensive travel correspondence addressed to his family and fiancée. Most of the letters are archived in the Royal Library in Copenhagen.
He reported his encounter with Goethe in a letter from Weimar in March 1823: "He inquired about Carus, lamented Tieck's fate, that this wonderful man must almost always be ill; asked what direction my journey would take, what the Oehlenschläger was working on; he spoke of the countless difficulties of my studies, and that it would be almost impossible for one man to presented the history of modern art".
Rejsebreve fra N.L. Høyen til forældrene og hustruen, Håndskriftsamlingen, NKS 2385 kvart, Royl Danish Library.

he visited but also to the artists he came across and the particular artistic perspective he encountered when he left home for the first time. [...] It was the German intellectual life that initially and enduringly influenced him, setting his mind in motion."[38]

Høyen's presence in Germany coincided with a period of significant and vigorous discourse concerning functions and concepts around modern museums, which originated in the 18th-century Vienna and continued to evolve throughout the first decades of the 19th century. This intellectual exchange engaged prominent personalities in a debate that held fundamental implications for the formulation of a modern museum paradigms. Among them a notable figure was Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785-1843), often acknowledged as the founder of modern archival research in art history, whose extensive experience included contributions to the establishment of galleries in both Berlin and Copenhagen, based on similar criteria for the arrangement of artworks.[39]

Rumohr embodied a connoisseur approach rooted in the context of museum, that distinct from the Hegelian approach among university-based art historians, and reverberated within discussions regarding the shape of a modern museum. As Michael Podro refers, "the contrast of Rumohr and Hegel is sometimes thought of as that between the empirical inquiry into history and a merely speculative system […]. Hegel's position that the work of art in its material character enriches the Idea in bringing it to sensory formulation, would have been unacceptable to Rumohr, for whom the work of art was not merely an embodiment or equivalence or elaboration of an Idea, but was itself part of activity of social and religious life."[40] In contradiction to Hegel's depiction of an inherently uniform Spirit, the Absolut Idea, and its progressive expression in specific material forms, Rumohr underscored the distinctive attributes of individual artists' expressions, entwined with the contextual material and societal constraints prevailing during their respective epochs.[41] These divergent perspectives caused a dispute concerning the appropriate method for the interpretation of a museum, particularly in the fervent debate surrounding the establishment of the museum in Berlin, during which Rumohr assisted in

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[38] Leo Swane, "Om Høyen," *Tilskueren*, no. 25 (1908), 732.

[39] Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer*, 116.

[40] Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 27-29.

[41] Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer*, 100-101.

the selection of paintings to Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794-1868), who was among listeners of Hegel's lectures on aesthetics from 1823 to 1829.[42]

Both the discussion preceding the opening of Berlin museum and contacts with German scholars, notably Rumohr and Waagen, exerted an impact on Høyen's development as an art historian and the formulation of his concepts concerning museums.[43] Contact with Rumohr and his connections with Denmark appear to be particularly important. Already during his travels in Italy alongside Ludwig Tieck in 1805-1806, Rumohr fostered contacts with the German-Danish artistic community clustered around Bertel Thorvaldsen in Rome.[44] Insights from Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg's diary also reveal the occurrence of several of Rumohr's visits to Copenhagen. They were underscored by his appointment in 1826 as an honorary member of the Academy and his influential role in shaping the Royal Collection of Graphic Art [Den Kongelige Kobberstiksamling].[45] Commencing in 1819, Rumohr provided advice to King Christian III

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[42] On the Rumohr's and Hegel's dispute in a context of museum discourse see: Douglas Crimp, "The End of Art and the Origin of the Museum," *Art Journal* 46, no. 4 (1987).

[43] In the Royal Library's archival holdings, one can find letters dispatched by Waagen to Høyen, encompassing the chronological span of 1839 to 1847, thus affirming the nature of their acquaintance. Moreover, in Høyen's biography can be found information that he and Waagen encountered in Pompeii in 1832, and in London in 1835, where they were supposed to see Raphael's drawings at the Hampton Court. Waagen also visited Copenhagen in 1868 to see Høyen's arrangement at the Christiansborg and Moltke's collection, for which Høyen wrote a catalogue. See: Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned*, 248.

[44] Enrica Yvonne Dilk, *Ein „practischer Aesthetiker". Studien zum Leben und Werk Carl Friedrich von Rumohrs* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000), 186-187.

[45] Villads Villadsen, ed., *C.W. Eckersbergs dagbøger. Bind 1: 1837-1853*, (København: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 2009). Eckersberg mentions Rumohr's visit to Copenhagen in June 1825, during which he saw paintings at the Christiansborg Palace, together with Prince Christian (p. 195). Eckersberg also documents subsequent visits in 1826 and 1827, related to Rumohr's honors at the Academy, his advisory role regarding the picture gallery and prints collection, as well as his attendance at art exhibitions (pp. 221 and 248). Additionally, Eckersberg notes Rumohr's further visits to art exhibitions and his work on a collection of prints together with Thiele in 1834 and 1835 (p. 588). At the instigation of Rumohr, in 1831 the collection of prints and drawings was separated from the Royal Library and established as an independent institution. Together with the inspector, J.M. Thiele, Rumohr published an overview of the collection in 1835. On the Royal Collection of Graphic Art see: Jesper Svenningsen, "En national samling på tegnebrættet. Centre for indsamling af danske tegninger 1810-45," *Perspective Journal*, 2017, https://www.perspectivejournal.dk/en-national-samling-paa-tegnebraettet-centre-for-indsamling-af-danske-tegninger-1810-45/ [access online: 20.05.2021].

(1786-1848) in matters concerning the development of the Picture Gallery, and he was further engaged in a process of attributing artworks within the royal collections.[46]

Ultimately, Rumohr's influence transcended the realm of advisory input on the arrangement of the Gallery. His ideas also left an imprint on Høyen's perspectives on art history, facilitated through extensive engagement with art historical literature and correspondence with intellectuals of the era. As elucidated in the following chapters, Høyen emerged as a prominent proponent of conceiving art as an integral component of national identity and cultural essence. His perspectives on the interconnection between art and national identity exerted a profound influence on the course charted by the artistic milieu in 19th-century Denmark. The imprint of Rumohr's impact will be visible in both Høyen's endeavors as a gallery inspector and in the methodological approach he adopts as an art historian.

What undoubtedly influenced Høyen's perspective as an art historian was commitment to grounding research within meticulous visual analyses of artworks, a methodology reminiscent of Rumohr's approach (visible, for instance, in archival research in Italy, in order to procure dependable documentary insights into Renaissance artists).[47] In his critical attitude, Rumohr held the belief that the museum's objective is misguided if it does not solely engage with authentic works, prioritizing particularly first-class masterpieces.[48] Høyen adopted a similar perspective, wherein the authenticity of the object bore paramount significance. This approach entailed a rigorous and discerning examination of original artworks, encompassing not solely the identification of artist and subject matters, but also extending to the determination of an artwork's authenticity. Rumohr's methodology furnished custodians of art collections with the possibility to engage with their holdings in a scholarly manner, and the principle of authenticity advocated by him found practical application across galleries and museums, shaping the selection of artworks for display and catalogues of collections."[49]

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[46] Villads Villadsen, *Statens Museum for Kunst: 1827-1952* (København: Statens Museum for Kunst, 1998), 40-41. For example, the attribution of *St. Catherine* (inv. no. KMSsp37), acquired at the auction of the Gonzaga collection in 1763, as a work of Leonardo was confirmed by Rumohr in 1825 and remained unchanged till 1900; or the *Adoration of the Magi* (inv. no. KMSsp3), purchased from the same auction and attributed to Perugino, was astutely identified by Rumohr as a copy of a Raphael painting from the Vatican collection.

[47] Ibidem, 44-45.

[48] Ibidem.

[49] Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer*, 100.

While the influence of German museums and researchers with whom Høyen had contact will become visible in his activities in the Royal Picture Gallery, it is also crucial to acknowledge the shifts occurring in galleries in Germany and Austria, as they had a significant impact across European museums and influenced the endeavors of Høyen's predecessors.

2.2.2. Early Inspirations. Dresden and Vienna

"The impatiently awaited hour of opening arrived and my admiration exceeded all my expectations. That salon turning in on itself, magnificent and so well-kept, the freshly gilded frames, the well-waxed parquetry, the profound silence that reigned, created a solemn and unique impression" — wrote Goethe in 1768 after his first visit to the Dresden Gallery.[50] Goethe was among the earliest visitors in the recently restructured gallery, which development aligns with the extensive reconfiguration of the majority of princely picture galleries established during the 17th and early 18th centuries in Germany and Austria. In the mid-eighteenth century a new arrangement for early modern paintings was initiated in Dresden, where artworks were organized according to the geographically defined schools. This approach was subsequently adopted in Düsseldorf and, in a more structured manner, in Vienna's Belvedere Museum during the late 1770s.[51] At the Belvedere, as described by Carole Paul, "pictures were separated according to the schools from which the artists hailed, and organized chronologically within each school, to demonstrate the development of various artistic traditions as well as the evolution of individual artists' oeuvres. This novel historical installation quickly established a standard […] But also raised important questions that would affect acquisition policies, as museums debated […] whether their emphasis should be on collecting great works by great artists or on adding lesser works to form more complete histories."[52]

The application of innovative arrangement methodologies and classification criteria extended beyond regional boundaries, resonating throughout Europe. This tendency was also notably apparent in Denmark, where the transformative shifts were initially observed through the conversion of the Royal Kunstkammer into a dedicated picture gallery, and subsequently, in the establishment of a publicly accessible museum. Hence, within the context of the efforts

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[50] Cit. per: Carol Duncan, "The Art Museum As Ritual," 430.

[51] Paul, "Preface: Toward a collective history," 13-14.

[52] Ibidem.

undertaken by custodians of the royal gallery in Copenhagen, it bears significance to investigate the organizational frameworks implemented in the galleries of Dresden and Vienna.

Originally established as the cabinet of curiosities of the Elector Augustus of Saxony, Dresden's collection underwent significant development and eventually served as an exemplification of fundamental principles conventionally employed in the display of art in picture galleries of the 18th century.[53] In the 1740s, Johann Gottfried Riedel (1690-1755) and Pietro Maria Guarienti (1678-1753), both painters and restorers, implemented new regulations governing the arrangement of the Dresden Gallery. This encompassed the methodical hanging of paintings in accordance with the prevailing hierarchy of pictorial genres during that era. Guarienti, for instance, attempted to exclude still lifes and landscapes, focusing primarily on large-scale history paintings from the Italian schools of the 16th and 17th centuries. Nevertheless, some Dutch, Flemish, and German works were included to encourage visual comparisons between the schools north and south of the Alps. As outlined by Tristan Weddigen, in a space divided into the Exterior and the Interior Gallery, "efforts were made to separate national schools, devoting the Interior Gallery exclusively to the Italian school as the aesthetic heart of the collection."[54] Weddigen also points out several principles related to the installation of works: "paintings completely covered the walls, including the areas between the windows, overwhelming viewers with the grandeur of the elector's collection. As was customary in early modern times, the pictures were arranged symmetrically along vertical axes. […] As a rule, two or more pendants hung side by side of flanking a center picture. […] it was customary to create

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[53] Like many renowned galleries of that time, the enrichment of princely and royal collections often involved acquisitions of significant groups of artworks from esteemed private collections. As a notable example may serve the purchase of works by Rubens, Titian, Correggio, or Guercino, by August III from the Galleria Estense in Modena in 1746. This acquisition became a catalyst for the commencement of the gallery's reconstruction. Similarly, Gerhard Morell's acquisition of exceptional works from Cardinal Gonzaga's collection, made on behalf of the Danish king, played a major role in the establishment of the first Royal Picture Gallery in Copenhagen.

[54] Tristan Weddigen, "The Picture Galleries of Dresden, Düsseldorf and Kassel: Princely Collections in Eighteenth-Century Germany," in *The first modern museums of art: the birth of an institution in 18th- and early-19th-century Europe*, ed. Carole Paul (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), 10-11. On the Dresden Gallery see also: Katharina Pilz, "Die Gemäldegalerie in Dresden unter Berücksichtigung der Mengsschen Abgusssammlung," in *Tempel der Kunst. Die Geburt des öffentlichen Museums in Deutschland 1701–1815*, ed. Bénédicte Savoy (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2006).

pairings with pictures of similar format and similar subject matter, composition, or coloring." [fig. 3][55]

While principles underpinning arrangement in Dresden will likewise find their manifestation in the picture gallery in Copenhagen, organized for the Danish monarch by Gerhard Morell (1710-1771) during the 1760s, the significantly developed display in Vienna will find resonance in the reconfiguration of the Royal Picture Gallery by Johan Conrad Spengler (1767-1839).

The collection of Emperor Josef II in the Belvedere Gallery, together with the Uffizi Gallery, reorganized under the reign of Grand Duke Peter Leopold of Tuscany, are often considered as the first great museums of our time.[56] The innovative arrangement was employed there by Basel-born art dealer Christian von Mechel (1737-1817), who supervised the gallery's reinstallation between 1778–1781.[57] Mechel, once employed to undertake the reorganization of the collections, formulated a comprehensive scheme for a museum display to be "in chronological order following the succession of great masters", with paintings organized by schools and the works of one master gathered in the same room, providing for the first time "a warehouse of the visible history of art." [fig. 4][58]

Mechel's innovative installation for the picture gallery went beyond evaluating paintings based solely on intrinsic qualities. By implementing a systematic ordering of artworks, he aimed to enhance the educational value, allowing visitors to grasp the historical development of art and

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[55] Weddigen, "The Picture Galleries," 150.

[56] The literature treating the reorganization of the Belvedere Gallery is vast. See: Debora J. Meijers, *Kunst als Natur. Die Habsburger Gemäldegalerie in Wien um 1780* (Wien: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Milano: Skira, 1992); Debora J. Meijers, "Classification as a Principle. The Transformation of the Vienna K.K. Bildergalerie into a 'Visible History of Art' (1772–1781)," in *Kunst als Kulturgut. Band II. „Kunst" und „Staat,"* eds. E. Weisser-Lohmann, et al. (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2011), and in same publication also a chapter by Karl Schütz, "Die Einrichtung der Wiener Gemäldegalerie durch Christian von Mechel"; Annette Schryen, "Die k.k. Bilder-Gallerie im Oberen Belvedere in Wien," in *Tempel der Kunst. Die Geburt des öffentlichen Museums in Deutschland 1701–1815*, ed. Bénédicte Savoy (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2006).

[57] Meijers, "Classification as a Principle," 163-169.

To be precise, it should be pointed out after Meijers, that the basic arrangement by schools had already been implemented in Vienna by Joseph Rosa, Mechel's predecessor. Nonetheless, Mechel enhanced the arrangement with a more methodical approach, incorporating further subdivisions and new criteria.

[58] Dominique Poulot, "Museums and Museologies," in *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe: Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks*, ed. Matthew Rampley (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 200.

gain a deeper understanding of its evolution. This approach prioritized the comprehensive exploration of art history, enabling viewers to appreciate the interconnectedness and progression of artistic styles and movements.[59] Mechel's arrangement of the collection, installed in fourteen rooms in the palace's *noble etage,* involved a complete separation of the Italian and Netherlandish schools. Allocation of each school to distinct wings of the palace allowed for a focused presentation of the Netherlandish holdings in the collection, which were meticulously selected to exemplify the development of the Dutch and Flemish art. As the presence of French and Spanish paintings was relatively limited, the collection could be broadly categorized into three main divisions: Italian, Dutch, and German.[60] In the subdivision of the Italian section, Mechel employed the established categories of Roman, Venetian, Lombard, Florentine, and Bolognese schools, but his innovative approach lay in how he organized the paintings within these regional designations. His goal was to group works by individual artists together, allowing for a direct comparison of different stages in an artist's career. This arrangement enabled viewers not only to evaluate paintings in relation to their contemporaries or other schools, but also to discern the progression of an artist's style and technique over time. This particular method was, however, exclusively implemented in the Italian galleries, while a more conventional chronological arrangement was adopted for the galleries dedicated to Dutch and German paintings.[61]

German galleries, as Michael Yonan refers, were organized by Mechel according to the Habsburg monarchy successive reigns.[62] Thus, the first room was dedicated to art from the period of Charles IV, Maximilian I, and Rudolf II; nearby Mechel installed two additional rooms of paintings by living Germans, which he called "experiments by the newer [artists] that due to acclaim and diligence deserve attention".[63] The intention behind it was to counter the misconception that fine art had only recently gained prominence in the Habsburg territories and that significant accomplishments in pictorial representation were exclusively witnessed in other regions. According to Meijers, "Mechel found a way of profiling the Northern schools, above all

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[59] Michael Yonan, "Kunsthistorisches Museum/Belvedere, Vienna: Dynasticism and the Function of Art," in *The first modern museums*, ed. Carole Paul, 176.

[60] Ibidem, 175-177.

[61] Ibidem.

[62] Ibidem.

[63] Ibidem.

the Germans, in relation to Italians, which satisfied the new patriotic criteria […]. This explicit privileged position accorded to the Italian school can be seen as the first step toward a reassessment of the national German school."[64] Furthermore, the description of Northern schools was accompanied by allusions to the Italian school, which sheds light on the rationale behind the presence of a substantial number of Italian works within the gallery, juxtaposed with artworks from diverse schools, including German masters. The arrangement underscored the enduring influence of Italian art, as German masters were still perceived through the lens of the Italian artistic tradition. Consequently, the endeavor of artists and connoisseurs to enhance their own school's standing through the study of Italian art, and thereby contribute to the advancement and renown of the nation, becomes apparent.[65]

Mechel's strategy was deliberate in its emphasis on elevating the significance of German art schools, thereby engendering a lasting resonance observable in the inception of diverse galleries committed to foregrounding their respective national artistic traditions. This paradigm not only affected German museums but its influence extended also to Denmark, where principles guiding artistic display and the representation of national identity were uniquely embodied within museum settings as well.

Mechel's arrangement of paintings facilitated an educational encounter for viewers, fostering the development of connoisseurship skills through observation and thoughtful comparison, rather than simply providing visual pleasure. This approach gained the appreciation of gallery visitors, such as the writer and publisher from Berlin, Friedrich Nicolai (1733-1811), who in the late 1780s expressed his recognition for the practice of assembling artworks of a consistent style, as it allows each work to be apprehended distinctly in its own context, in direct contrast to mixed exhibitions where the proximity of dissimilar artworks often altered their perceived significance.[66] Mechel's gallery was not simply intended to overwhelm visitors with its diversity of masterpieces, but supposed to lead to serious study through comparisons and analyzis of various aspects of individual paintings, such as the choice of theme, composition, drawing, or use of colour.[67] As Debora J. Meijers concludes: "the objective of the whole

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[64] Meijers, "Classification as a Principle," 174-178.

[65] Ibidem, 175.

[66] Anke Te Heesen, *Teorie muzeum*, trans. Agata Teperek (Warszawa, Niemiecki Instytut Historyczny: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2016), 47.

[67] Meijers, "Classification as a Principle," 170-172.

endeavor was […] that the arrangement as a whole and in its several parts would be educational and would approach most closely a visible history of art. Such a large, public collection […] can be compared to a well-endowed library, where the visitor with a thirst for knowledge is pleased to find work of all kinds and periods, not only what is attractive and perfect, but alternating contrasts, the contemplation and comparison of which […] will enable him to become a connoisseur of art".[68] The emphasis on education and the accessibility of the gallery to the general public were key criteria for a modern museum, alongside the systematic organization of the collection.

2.2.3. Discourse on the Berlin Museum

In 1797, at the inauguration of the yearly exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin, Aloys Hirt (1759-1837) delivered a lecture concerning the establishment of the art museum.[69] This ignited a profound debate that intensified particularly among the members of a committee appointed by Friedrich Wilhelm III (1770-1840), in accordance with his decree from April 1823 on the construction of the museum.[70] The commission, headed by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), comprised figures such as Aloys Hirt (1759-1837), Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841), Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794-1868), Christian Daniel Rauch (1777-1857), replaced during his absence by Christian Friedrich Tieck (1876-1851), as well as Heinrich Dähling (1773-1850), Wilhelm Wach (1787-1845), and Jakob Schlesinger

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[68] Ibidem, 164.

[69] Aloys Hirt arrived in Berlin in 1796 in the capacity of a Prussian court councilor and as a professor at the Royal Academy of Arts. Commencing in 1810, he assumed the role of a professor of drawing. From the outset, he displayed profound engagement in the endeavors to establish a museum in Berlin.
During that period, the only art collection accessible to the public in Berlin was housed within the Academy of Fine Arts, where from 1818 to 1827 artworks purchased by the Prussian state from the collections of Giustiniani and Solly were exhibited.

[70] James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World. From the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78.
The discussions concerned, for instance, presentation and arrangement of collections within the museum. The establishment of the commission was instigated by the inherent connection between the conceptualization, funding, and construction of the Berlin museum with the administrative structures of the Prussian state. Furthermore, the involvement of the monarch within the museum space remained restricted. Notably, the edifice unequivocally belonged to the public domain, characterized by the absence of ceremonial entrances or festive areas, thus eliminating any vestige of art's origins as a means of adorning courtly existence.

(1792-1855).[71] Although Rumohr was not officially a committee member, he actively participated in the discourse, notably pertaining to the selection of paintings.

One of the central figures engaged in that discourse from an art historical perspective was Waagen, who ascended to the role of museum director in 1830.[72] He championed the notion that the foremost purpose of the museum, conceived as a public institution integral to the national cultural narrative, should focus on imparting the pedagogical significance of artworks with the aim to develop aesthetic sense and taste. This principle underpinned Waagen's decisions concerning the museum's acquisition strategy and the display of collection. Based on the postulate that he collaboratively conceived with Schinkel – "first to delight, then to instruct" [*erst erfreuen, dann belehren*] – the museum should provide enjoyment and aesthetic engagement, aiming to unfold the viewer's receptiveness to the formative influence of art. According to Horst Bredekamp and Adam Labuda, while preparing an exhibition, Waagen adhered to a scholarly arrangement based on historical periods and artistic schools; however, he deviated from Hirt's inclination towards comprehensive representation, by emphasizing preeminent artistic accomplishments and accentuating aesthetic nuances.[73] For Waagen, museum was an empirical field where he could apply the methodologies of art history. By employing the historical-critical approach, he formulated a basic categorization of artworks, which in further reflections also gave an opportunity to compare different schools.[74] Thus, the museum's

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[71] Ibidem, 72.

The literature referring that discourse is vast. See for instance: Rainer Michaelis, Christoph Martin Vogtherr, "Die erste Anordnung der Gemäldegalerie im Alten Museum 1830", in *Kunst als Kulturgut*, eds. E. Weisser-Lohmann, et al.; in the same publication also chapter by Elisabeth Weisser-Lohmann, "Das Nationalmuseum – Konzeptionen um 1800"; Thomas W. Gaehtgens, "Altes Museum, Berlin: Building Prussia's First Modern Museum", in *The first modern museums,* ed. C. Paul; Christoph Martin Vogtherr, "Das Königliche Museum zu Berlin. Planungen und Konzeptionen des Ersten Berliner Kunstmuseums", *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 39 (1997).

[72] Following his academic pursuits encompassing history, philosophy, and philology at Wrocław and Heidelberg, Waagen became Hirt's assistant in 1823. His role involved contributions to the cataloguing of the Solly collection, and subsequently, he became more involved in the establishment of a new museum.

[73] Horst Bredekamp and Adam Labuda, "Historia sztuki, uniwersytet, muzeum i centrum Berlina 1810-1873," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, vol.72, 3(2010), 252-253.

[74] Ibidem.

This is revealed in Waagen's dissertation on Hubert and Johann van Eyck, where he disentangles distinctive artistic processes and subsequently situates them within a broader historical framework.

objective should also encompass providing visitors with an understanding of the evolutionary trajectory of artists, coupled with a discerning insight into various historical epochs.

Waagen and Schinkel's approach diverged from Hirt's perspective, leading to a clash that culminated in Hirt's departure from the commission in 1829. While Hirt advocated for a systematic-historical arrangement, placing emphasis on the didactic and scholarly intent of the display that would faithfully portray the evolution of art, Waagen and Schinkel underscored the significance of aesthetic engagement.[75] Reflected in the museum's arrangement, both approaches recognized the significance of categorizing artworks based on historical periods and artistic schools. However, a conspicuous disparity emerged concerning the spectrum of exhibited artworks. Hirt upheld the principle of selecting paintings based on historical grounds, wherein even lesser pieces would be exhibited as instances of the "decline of art", with the goal of achieving comprehensive coverage rather than prioritizing exemplary quality.[76] On the contrary, Waagen, supported by Schinkel and Rumohr, advocated for the display of solely the most exceptional artistic accomplishments, in order to establish an aesthetically excellent collection.[77] Waagen believed that the museum's primary purpose is "to advance the spiritual education of the nation through the experience of beauty".[78] Within this context, it is emphasised that in the discussion surrounding the museum's function, the imperative of general education [*Bildung*] persisted, although numerous scientific disciplines that gained autonomy during the 19th century chose to relinquish it.[79] The prerequisite for *Bildung* was that an autonomous individual attains education through the medium of aesthetic experience and discerns ethical propriety through personal volition. Thus, the primary objective of the art museum became to render artworks accessible to the public, offering an opportunity for education and self-development. The Humboldtian conviction that art should elevate human morality, as manifested in this context, will later became visible in N.L. Høyen's perspective on aesthetics and the role of art.

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[75] Ibidem.

[76] Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World*, 80.

[77] Bredekamp and Labuda, "Historia sztuki," 252-253.

[78] Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World*, 115.

[79] Bredekamp and Labuda, "Historia sztuki," 239.

Museums were intricately interwoven with the notion of *Bildung*, influenced by philosophers such as Herder and Hegel, and developed in the writings of Humboldt (*Theorie der Bildung des Menschen*, 1793), encompassing a diverse spectrum of implications that interlace formal education, aesthetic refinement, and character formation.

Within the discourse on the establishment of the Berlin museum, as Michał Mencfel points out, Humboldt sought to achieve some sort of harmony between aesthetic pleasure and historical and artistic education, or, to use Humboldt's own words from his letter to Waagen from 1892: "I think that aesthetic and historical needs impose, in fact, similar requirements when it comes to the organization of the gallery. […] Indeed, in matters of art, even a scholar can justify and base his judgment solely on his feelings and aesthetic impressions. An exhibition must therefore be able to create such an impression in a full and undisturbed manner, enhanced whenever possible by favourable combinations of [works] for both an expert and art lover".[80] Humboldt's conclusive report endorsed Waagen's and Schinkel's conviction that the primary function of the museum lays in cultivating an appreciation for beauty, rather than offering a comprehensive representation of art (this led him, for instance, to reject the notion of employing plaster casts to address historical gaps within the collection of classical sculpture).

As a result of the briefly aforementioned discussion, upon its public inauguration in 1831, the Berlin Museum unveiled a gallery encompassing nearly 2000 paintings, which were arranged based on a blend of historical and aesthetic criteria derived from the collaborative efforts and a series of negotiated compromises between Schinkel, Waagen, Humboldt, and Rumohr [fig. 5]. The gallery space was divided into a sequence of rooms, strategically designed to maximize the use of natural daylight. On the ground level, visitors found treasures of the ancient world, serving as the foundation for all artistic accomplishments. Ascending to the upper level, they embarked on a chronological path, punctuated by the greatest examples of Western painting, with an emphasis on the masterpieces from the Italian school.[81] Both the organization of the collection and the structure of the catalogue were segmented into three major sections. The initial section encompassed the Italian, French, and Spanish schools; the subsequent section was devoted to the Dutch and German artworks, while the third section was dedicated to "historical curiosities" (the latter featured predominantly paintings from the 14th and 15th centuries across all schools, along with individual works dating to earlier or later periods, which included several Mannerist

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[80] Michał Mencfel, *Athanasius Raczyński (1788–1874). Aristocrat, Diplomat, and Patron of the Arts*, trans. Thomas Anessi and Małgorzata Olsza (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022), 452.

[81] Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World*, 80.

pieces). In the Italian section, the division was based on schools, whereas the Dutch and German sections were categorized according to genres.[82]

In the arrangement of the gallery, following Rumohr's advice, it was essential that "the German and Italian collections met each other in a way that was decisive for the development of art […], therefore it was essential to bring Antonello, Bellino and everything related in the direction and manner very close to Van Eyck."[83] Both schools converged at the juncture of their historically pivotal interplay, during the crucial phase in art history when the Dutch school was revered as the seminal contributor. Central to this determination was the notion of establishing a connection between the two schools in relation to their impact. As a result, the concept of school was also defined in a new way. Although the geographic context of the artist's residence and activity was deemed relevant in the evaluation, the primarily determinant for attributing a particular master to a specific school rested upon the nature of instruction and the spirit encapsulated within his creations.[84]

The Berlin gallery in its final form sparked a discussion and evoked various reactions. Amid the array of critical perspectives, one notable commentary emerged from Atanazy Raczyński in 1841. He described the Berlin museum as a "temple to deception and trickery," contending that a balance between the historical and aesthetic values of the exhibition proved elusive; and that the academic and historical objectives would remain unattainable if matters of taste were disregarded.[85] The museum dispute that underpinned the genesis of the Berlin gallery reverberate with broader implications, as debates regarding whether the arrangement of paintings should be anchored in historical or aesthetic considerations stood poised to delve into a larger discourse concerning the fundamental role of the modern museum. At the same time, as articulated by Bredekamp and Labuda, it bore witness to a significant juncture in the development of the art history discipline, marking the point of the crystallization of the historical-critical method.[86] All of these aspects will also resonate within the discourse surrounding museums in Copenhagen.

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[82] Rainer Michaelis and Christoph Martin Vogtherr, "Die erste Anordnung der Gemäldegalerie im Alten Museum 1830," in *Kunst als Kulturgut*, eds. E. Weisser-Lohmann, et al., 230-232.

[83] Ibidem, 232.

[84] Ibidem.

[85] Mencfel, *Athanasius Raczyński*, 453.

[86] Bredekamp and Labuda, "Historia sztuki," 244.

Fig. 2

Jørgen Sonne, *Arrival of Thorvaldsen in Copenhagen*, 1846-1848, frieze, Thorvaldsens Museum

Fig. 3

Unknown artist, *Interior of the Royal Gallery in Dresden,* 1830, aquatint on paper, Dresden State Art Collections

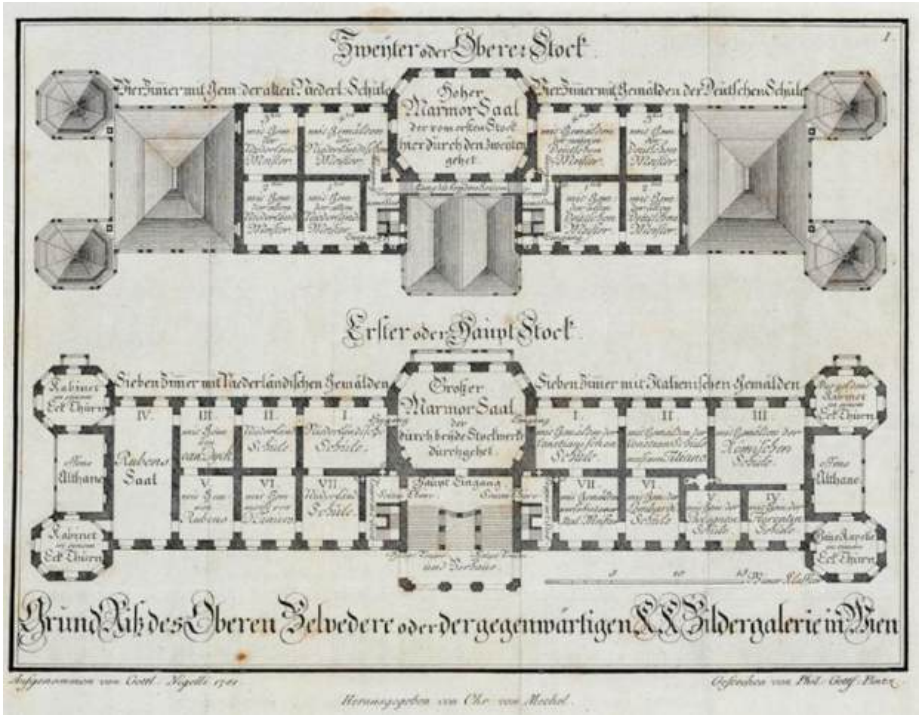

Fig. 4

Floor plan of the Imperial Gallery in Vienna. Source: Christian Mechel, *Verzeichniß der Gemälde der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Bilder-Gallerie in Wien*, Wien 1783

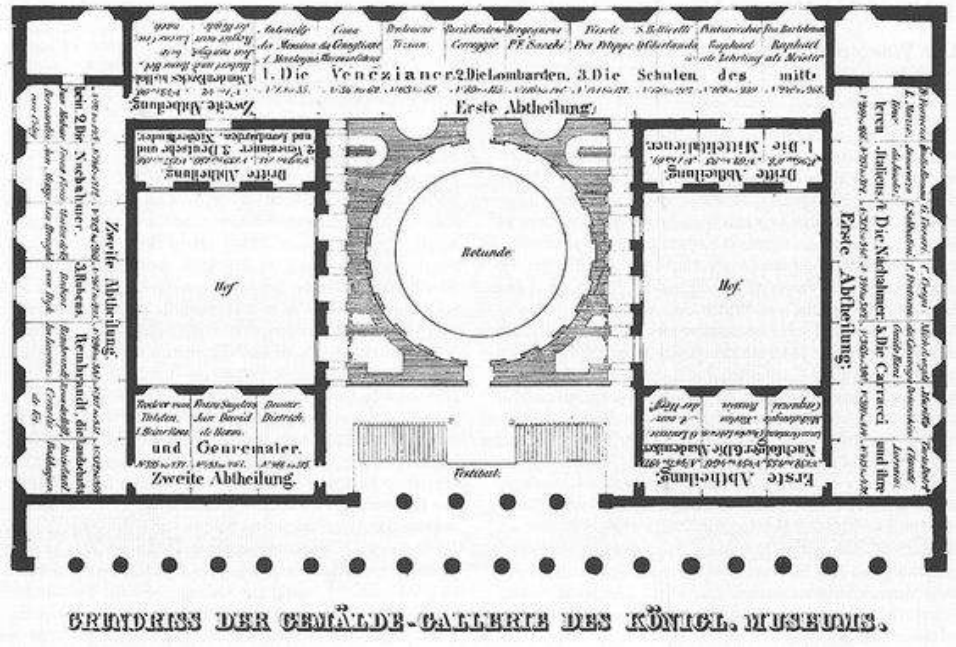

Fig. 5

Ground plan of the Picture Gallery in the Altes Museum in Berlin. Source: Gustav Friedrich Waagen, Verzeichniss der Gemälde-Sammlung des Königlichen Museums zu Berlin, Berlin 1830

III From the Kunstkammer to the Royal Picture Gallery

Royal collections in Copenhagen, with their roots going back to 16th century, are among the oldest in the world in terms of continuity.[1] However, one cannot discuss the subsequent evolution of the royal collections in Denmark into a system of public museums without examining their nucleus, namely the Royal Kunstkammer. Founded in 1650 by king Frederick III (ruling 1648-1670), the Kunstkammer underwent continuous expansion through the incorporation of the Ole Worm collection in 1655, and purchases by the next kings, notably Frederick IV (ruling 1699-1740), who acquired, among others, an extensive group of Venetian glass, and Christian VI (ruling 1730-1746), who amassed, for instance, remarkable assortment of coins and medals. The inventory lists made between 1737 and 1807 provide evidence of the significant growth of the Kunstkammer collection, which increased from approximately 4,000 to 10,500 objects during the 18th century.[2] This development continued until the dissolution of the Kunstkammer in 1821, which lead to a subsequent division of all its constituent collections. Their relocation, including the painting collection, which was transferred to the Christiansborg Palace in 1824, marked the inception of separate museums and set the groundwork for the establishment of specialized galleries.

Contributions of esteemed art dealers and scholars, e.g. Gerhard Morell (1710-1771) and Johan Conrad Spengler (1767-1839), were instrumental in the advancement of these endeavors. During the second half of the 18th century, under Morell's guidance, a momentous milestone in the Danish museum history was achieved with the establishment of the first royal gallery of painting. After a major reorganization, conducted mainly by J.C. Spengler in the first decades of the 19th century, it was opened to the public as the Royal Picture Gallery [det Kongelige Billedgalleri paa Christiansborg]. Morell played a significant role in establishing the royal

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[1] While Frederick III is widely regarded as the first Danish ruler who initiated the creation of a significant collection, it is noteworthy that the acquisition of artworks can be traced back earlier. In 1521, king Christian II (ruling 1513-1523) received a gift of Albrecht Dürer's prints, marking one of the earliest recorded acquisitions. Subsequently, around 1645, during the reign of Christian IV (who ruled 1588-1648), the collection was enriched through acquisitions made by painters Jonas Charisius, Peter Isaksz, and Simon de Pas, who were commissioned to procure paintings for the king in Amsterdam or Utrecht. Royal inventories from 1638 to 1650 reveal approx. 300 paintings housed in the Copenhagen Castle and over 500 paintings in the Frederiksborg Castle.

[2] Bente Gundestrup, "The Royal Danish Kunstkammer," *Museum International* 40, no. 4 (1988), 187-188.

collections during the golden age of European collecting. Meanwhile, Spengler's contributions were instrumental in a systematic organization and enhancing the accessibility of the collections to the public. Their common efforts played a pivotal role in shaping a distinctive character of the royal gallery prior to the stewardship of Niels Laurits Høyen. A comprehensive understanding of their actions and transformations that transpired within the collection, including a change of venues and methods employed for displaying the artworks, is crucial in discerning the fundamental principles that underpinned N.L. Høyen's approach.

3.1. Shaping the Collection: Royal Danish Kunstkammer

The origins of the Danish royal collection, which would later evolve into a national gallery, can be traced back to the establishment of the cabinet of curiosities by king Frederick III Oldenburg, who reigned from 1648 to 1670. In addition to the king's personal acquisitions, primarily focused on Italian paintings, a noteworthy foundation of the royal Kunstkammer was the renowned collection of *naturalia* and *artificialia,* owned by Ole Worm (1588-1654), a professor of medicine at the University of Copenhagen, king's personal physician, and highly regarded antiquarian.[3]

The encyclopedic collection assembled by Worm aptly captured the essence of the cabinet of curiosities as a microcosm reflecting the state of knowledge, dedicated to the *rerum omnium rariorum*. The collection, serving as a foundation for a scientific research conducted by Worm and his students, was documented in the *Museum Wormianum* (1655) — a catalogue, which provided a comprehensive description of the collection, showcasing the breadth and depth of Worm's scholarly pursuits. Within the catalogue, the collection was organized into four distinct categories: fossils, plants, animals, and handicrafts. The inclusion of handicrafts demonstrates that Worm's collection extended beyond the realm of natural sciences, encompassing a wide range of artifacts that showcased artistic craftsmanship and cultural significance. This classification system provided a comprehensive framework for understanding and appreciating the diverse array of the collected specimens and objects.

Based on engraving from the *Museum Wormianum*, Zdzisław Żygulski described the display of Worm's collection: "the room, resembling contemporary painting galleries, featured

[3] Purchases of Frederick III were reported, for example, by Henrik Liisberg. See: Henrik Carl Bering Liisberg, *Kunstkammeret. Dets Stiftelse og ældste historie* (København: Det Nordiske Forlag, 1897), 130-138.

windows on one side only, while the remaining three smooth walls were adorned with shelves. These shelves displayed homogeneous objects with Latin inscriptions indicating their respective species, akin to the arrangement found in old pharmacies. The engraving reveals various inscriptions, such as »salia« (salts) […], »conchilia« (shells) […], offering explanatory labels for the objects. The entire room was meticulously filled with exhibits. Stuffed animals, as well as bird and fish skeletons were suspended from the beamed ceiling, while animal horns were hung between the windows. Additionally, weapons, tools, and clothing were placed in the corners."[4] Following Worm's death, his comprehensive collection was acquired by Frederick III and incorporated into the royal collection of artifacts. Regrettably, from that point onward, the collection was no longer presented as a unified whole, as can be deduced from the entries in the inventory from 1674, which indicate that all the objects previously belonging to Worm, were dispersed throughout various sections of the Kunstkammer.[5] During that period, the supervision over the collection was entrusted to Kunstkammer's inspectors: Bertel Bartholin (1614-1690), professor of Latin philology, who was bestowed with the title of *Antiqvarius regius* by Frederick III, and Karel van Mander III (ca. 1609-1670), as it was customary in European courts of the era that painters served as custodians of collections.[6]

As the royal collection continued to expand, the issue of insufficient space for its storage and display became more prominent. Even after relocating part of the collection to the Rosenborg Castle, the remaining collections at the main royal residence, the Copenhagen Castle [Københavns Slot] on the islet of Slotsholmen, still occupied eight rooms.[7] Therefore, in the early 1660s, Frederick III enlisted the services of Danish master builder Albertus Mathiesen (1635-1668) to design a new building, alongside the Copenhagen Castle, capable of accommodating the entire royal collection. The construction of the three-story Royal

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[4] Zdzisław Żygulski, *Muzea na świecie. Wstęp do muzealnictwa* (Warszawa: PWN, 1982), 35-36.

[5] Camilla Mordhorst, *Genstandsfortællinger. Fra Museum Wormianum til de moderne museer* (København: Museum Tusculanum, 2009), 54-55.

[6] Ibidem, 49-50.

[7] Holger Rasmussen, *Dansk museums historie - de kulturhistoriske museer* (København: Dansk Artikelindeks, 1979), 37.

Kunstkammer building [Kongens Kunstkammer] took place from 1665 to 1673, representing one of Denmark's earliest and major examples of Baroque architecture [fig. 6, fig. 7].[8]

The Royal Kunstkammer, connected to the castle by a small corridor, featured a long and relatively narrow design. Above its entrance, the sculptures of Mars and Pallas Athena adorned the façade, accompanied by the motto "Ars - Lex - Mars", symbolizing the three types of collections housed within. The ground floor of the building accommodated the armory, while the first floor housed a library, and the second floor was dedicated entirely to the royal collections.[9] Although its construction was completed in 1670, the process of transferring the collections from the royal castle to the new building continued until 1680, as prior to the transfer the first comprehensive inventory of all the objects had been carried out.[10]

Seven years after the collection was installed in the Kunstkammer, king Christian V entrusted the task of creating its first catalogue to Holger Jacobæus (1650-1701), professor of philosophy, history, and geography. Jacobæus diligently compiled a comprehensive catalogue, which was published in Latin, in 1696 under the title *Museum Regium*.[11] It provided a detailed description of both the classification and display method of the royal collection of artifacts.

According to the catalogue and inventories from 1737, the collection was distributed over nine distinct rooms: the Artificial Cabinet, which housed objects crafted from ivory, precious stones, silver and gold. It also includes portrait medallions of kings; the Perspective Cabinet, where one could find, among others, Gijsbrechts' *trompe l'oeil*; the Indian Cabinet, which displayed objects such as weapons, or textiles from America, Africa, India, China and Japan; the Heroic Cabinet with a large collection of portraits featuring Danish and foreign kings, heroes, as well as statues depicting Roman gods; the Cabinet of Antiquities, which exhibits a great number of antiquities, including fragments of metopes originating from the Parthenon, as well as guns, optical and mechanical inventions; the Model Cabinet, with models of ships, fortifications, architecture, and mechanical objects; the Cabinet of Natural Curiosities dedicated to natural

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[8] Helge Gamrath, "Københavns Slot," in *Christiansborg Slot*, eds. Kristian Hvidt, et al. (København: Nyt nordisk Forlag 1975), 1:127.

[9] Britta Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer to art museum, exhibiting and cataloguing art in the royal collections in Copenhagen, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*, PhD dissertation (London: Courtland Institute of Art, 2004), 29-30.

[10] The inventory was entrusted to the collection's keepers, Bendix Grodtschilling I (ca. 1620-1690), and then his son Bendix Grodtschilling II (1655-1707).

[11] Rasmussen, *Dansk museums historie*, 37.

history specimens and objects related to the study of the natural world; the Cabinet of Medals, that housed an extensive collection of ancient and modern coins and medals; and the Gallery consisting of artworks of numerous painters representing different genres.[12] These nine rooms collectively provided a diverse display of the royal collection, showcasing various artistic, cultural, historical and scientific aspects.

Among various chambers in the Kunstkammer, only one was designated for the purpose of the gallery [Galleri Kammer] — a 70-meter-long room, where paintings adorned the entire walls, showcasing an impressive display of artistic wealth.[13] In the report of the inventory from 1737, paintings within the Galleri Kammer were presented on the basis of genres and schools, aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of works by renowned Old Masters, reflecting the evolving tastes and interests of the ruling monarch.[14] However, the arrangement of works was not very systematic, and did not follow a chronological or topographical order. Instead, paintings were grouped together based on aesthetic similarities, such as shared painting style or technique.[15]

While the Galleri Kammer served as the primary location for the exhibition of artworks, it is important to note that the paintings were also displayed in other areas of the Kunstkammer building, where they often served as illustrative elements, which complemented objects collected in a specific cabinet. The placement of Lucas Cranach's painting which presents Stag Hunt of Frederick III in a cabinet which housed weapons may serve as an example of this practice.[16] A significant shift in this approach occurred during the mid-eighteenth century, which came along with a noticeable change in the perception of art within larger collections. Artworks ceased to be viewed solely as illustrative or decorative elements and began to be recognized as valuable historical and artistic objects. This transition in the status of art and its display within collections was influenced by an increased knowledge and research conducted by gallery inspectors in the preparation of catalogues and inventories. Hence the nature of the Kunstkammer, which until

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[12] Gundestrup, "The Royal Danish Kunstkammer," 187-188.

[13] Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer*, 31-32.

[14] Britta Tøndborg, "From specimens, curiosities and illustrations to representatives of the history of art. Investigating the role of painting in the display context of the eighteenth century Copenhagen Kunstkammer," *Nordisk Museologi*, no. 1 (2005), 56-57.

[15] Ibidem.

[16] Ibidem.

now has been a place "where the universe as a whole becomes visible through objects capable of representing the basic categories of beings and things", began to change.[17] One of the notable developments was a gradual separation of art collections from other objects in the Kunstkammer, which led to the implementation of new ways of designing collections of paintings and sculptures, as well as new models of exhibiting them. In case of Denmark, extensive changes in this matter were introduced by art dealer and collector, Gerhard Morell, who played a significant role in the development and transformation of the Kunstkammer into the Danish Royal Picture Gallery [fig. 8].

Although Morell's education is not widely documented, an early involvement in the art trade indicates his knowledge and experience in the field. Morell's appointment as an inspector of the Count Frederick Ernst of Bayreuth Court Gallery in 1745 suggests that he possessed a certain level of expertise in art and had established connections within the international art market.[18] These interactions would have provided him with valuable insights into the art trade and collection practices of the time. Moreover, his involvement in the acquisition of artworks from Dutch auctions for German princely collections, e.g. Hesse-Cassel and Mecklenburg-Schwerin, further demonstrates his familiarity with international markets and an ability to navigate the complexities of art transactions.[19] By sourcing artworks from Dutch auctions and facilitating their acquisition by German princely collections, he helped to introduce new artistic styles and trends to the region.[20]

Indeed, Morell's work as an art dealer was significant in shaping the art market and the profession itself during his time. As a dealer, he served the needs of princely and royal courts, as well as private collectors, acquiring artworks on their behalf and assisting in expanding their collections. As Michael North points out, Morell was probably also one of the earliest art dealers

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[17] Krzysztof Pomian, *Zbieracze i osobliwości. Paryż-Wenecja: XVI-XVIII wiek* (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2012), 73.

[18] Anna Oleńska, "On a Transaction in Paintings from 1748. Gerhard Morell's Activities as an Art-Dealer in th Polish-Lithianian Commonwealth," in *Wandrunngen: Künstler - Kunstwerk - Motiv - Stifter*, eds. Małgorzata Omilanowska and Anna Straszewska (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 2005), 380-381.

[19] Michael North, "The Transfer and Reception of Dutch Art in the Baltic Area during the Eighteenth Century: The Case of the Hamburg Dealer Gerhard Morell," in *In His Milieu. Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias*, eds. Amy Gohlany, et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 303.

[20] See: Michael North, *Gerhard Morell und die Entstehung einer Sammlungskultur im Ostseeraum des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Greifswald: Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität, Lehrstuhl für Nordische Geschichte, 2012).

to become a connoisseur, and his circles of clients included not only German, but also collectors from other European countries, such as Denmark.[21] He played a significant role in the formation of prominent private art collections in Copenhagen, such as those owned by Otto Thott, Johan Ludvig Holstein, and Adam Gottlob Moltke. Morell's connections in the art market, particularly in Amsterdam, allowed him to source works by Dutch and Flemish masters for the aforementioned Danish collectors. His reputation and success in serving private collectors eventually led him to gain recognition within the royal court circles. This was likely facilitated by his association with Adam G. Moltke, a courtier and diplomat, who recommended Morell to the royal court.[22]

As a result, since 1759, Morell was involved in the inventory of the Kunstkammer collection, working closely with Johan Salomon Wahl (1689-1765), painter and custodian. This gave Morell the opportunity to familiarize himself with the collection and gain insights into the challenges related to its storage and display. During his involvement with the inventory, Morell recognized the need for a dedicated gallery space for the paintings, which could be placed in the corridor connecting king's palace with the Kunstkammer building. Thus, in the early 1760's, he successfully convinced king Frederick V (ruling 1746-1766) of the necessity of establishing a new picture gallery. In his letter to Frederick V, Morell expressed firstly his critique on the existing gallery and offered suggestions for improvement. He emphasized a need for the proper space and display, as well as the inconvenience caused by paintings being hung too closely together. Morell proposed changes which included prioritizing the display of a large-format paintings and removing works that had been placed on the floor. He also criticized the gallery space, describing it as a narrow, low, dark, and overloaded with paintings.[23] Morell's observations and recommendations likely stemmed from his expertise as an art dealer and understanding the importance of proper arrangement of artworks. His criticism and suggestions aimed to enhance the optimal appreciation of the works within the gallery. Therefore, he submitted a detailed project for a new gallery, where he outlined how selected pieces would be displayed in a dedicated space, designed specifically for a painting gallery. Another notable

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[21] Ibidem.

[22] Jørn Rubow, "Giovanni Battista & Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo i museets Salinger," *Kunstmuseets årsskrift* 39-42 (1956), 29-48.

[23] See: Peter Hertz, "Malerisamlingens tilvækst og tilpasning gennem tiderne. Galleriet under Spengler og Høyen's revision," *Kunstmuseets årsskrift*, no. 11-12 (1926), 358-390.

aspect of Morell's suggestions was the intention to make the new gallery accessible not only to the king and his family, but also to a wider audience, especially students of the Royal Academy of Art [det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi].[24]

Morell's efforts to advocate for a separate gallery led to his appointment as the main inspector of the Kunstkammer [kunstkammerforvalter] in 1759. Since the early 1760s he worked on establishing a separate picture gallery at the Lion's Corridor [Der Löwen Gang] —a large hall connecting the royal palace with the Kunstkammer, which was transformed into a baroque gallery (approx. 40 m long, 11 m high, and 5 m wide) [fig. 9].[25] Inventories of the royal collection of paintings, as well as a catalogue from 1767 compiled by Morell, provide instructive revelations into the construction of the gallery. This involved a combination of paintings from the Kunstkammer with new acquisitions, primarily historical and genres paintings, as well as still lifes and landscapes from the Dutch, Flemish, and Italian schools.[26] Between 1759 and 1764 Morell purchased nearly 300 paintings by European masters, including Rembrandt's *Christ in Emmaus* and Mantegna's *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*, which still remain some of the most important Italian paintings in the collection of the National Gallery of Denmark.[27] Among other artists strongly represented in the new acquisitions were also Rubens, Ruisdael, Jordanes, Jan Both, Ferdinand Bol, Jan van Eyck and Lucas Cranach. Morell made notable purchases during the auction in Amsterdam in 1763, where he acquired works by Petrus Christus, Salomon van Ruisdael, Jan van Goyen, and Jan Steen. Additionally, in the same year, he procured paintings from the auction of Cardinal Silvio Gonzaga's collection (his purchases included: *St. Matthew* by Perino del Vaga, *Annunciation* by Barocci, Schedoni's *Deeds of Christian Charity*, Ortolano's *St.*

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[24] Ibidem.

[25] Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer*, 43.

At that time, the royal residence connected to the Kunstkammer building was Christiansborg Palace, which was situated in the exact location of the former Copenhagen Castle. The original castle was demolished in 1731, and the new palace was designed by Elias Häusser for king Christian VI. Construction took place between 1733 and 1766. The palace was destroyed by fire in 1794.

[26] Tøndborg, "From specimens, curiosities and illustrations," 65-66.

[27] Jesper Svenningsen, *Samlingssteder: Udenlandsk billedkunst i danske samlermiljøer 1690-1840* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2023), 67.

Margaret, Menzocchi's *Madonna with Saints* and the *Portrait of Lorenzo Cybo* by Parmigianino).[28]

While creating the new gallery, Morell aimed to present the main painting genres, from large-scale historical painting to landscape and still life. Although explicit details regarding his criteria for selecting works were not documented, the surviving plan of Morell's gallery from 1764 provides valuable insights [fig. 10]. One of the considerations in the selection process was the size of artworks, ensuring a symmetrical arrangement. Another noteworthy aspect is the partial grouping of paintings by schools. While a fully chronological arrangement and systematic grouping according to schools cannot yet be observed within Morell's gallery (an example of which is paintings by Nicolas Poussin and Frans Snyders hung in close proximity), there is a discernible inclination towards grouping paintings predominantly by Dutch and Flemish masters. This finds a confirmation in a short description of Morell's gallery in the biography by J.C. Spengler from 1842, where Louis Mourier points out: "there were 60 paintings in the gallery, including works by Ferdinand Bol, ter Brugghen, Karel van Mander, Jordaens, Rembrandt, Backhuysen, Hondecoeter, Poussin, van Honthorst and van Dyck; representing biblical, mythological, and still-life themes."[29]

Even though there are a few sources dealing with the design of Morell's gallery, some information can also be gleaned from Christian Conrad Dassel's (1768-1826) travel diary kept while touring Denmark: "There were sixty different pieces by the most famous masters — historical pieces, genre pieces, landscapes, perspectives, flower, animal and fruit pieces, hunting and battle scenes, and a couple of excellent sea battles. Kunstkammerforvalter went to great lengths to explain what made each painter's manner exceptional: the pose, colour, the play of shadows, the tone, and the mixture of the tints, the structure, the expression, the draperies and folds. For instance, he took out two pieces by Hermann Sachtleven; one depicting a palace on a mountain by a river, the other a cave, through which an elaborate landscape can be seen; he immediately pointed out how excellent the artist's choice [of motif] was […]. Finally, he took

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[28] Harald Olsen, "Et malet galleri af Pannini: Kardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzagas samling," *Kunstmuseets årsskrift* 38 (1951), 90-103.

Cardinal Gonzaga's collection comprised more than 800 Italian and Northern European paintings. After his death, his nephew Luigi Valenti Gonzaga sold the villa and the painting collection. At the painting by Giovanni Paolo Pannini, depicting the interior of Cardinal Gonzaga's collection (1740, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford), might be noticed Ortolano's, Parmigianino's and Barrocci's paintings, which were bought to the Danish royal collection.

[29] Louis Mourier, *Johan Conrad Spenglers Levnet* (Kjøbenhavn: trykt hos J. D. Qvist, 1842), 6.

out a painting by Peter Paul Rubens, depicting nuptials of Antony and Cleopatra, and pointed out naturally beautiful colouring of this artist, the effects he produced with an apt mixture of light and shade, and the pleasing treatment of the folds of drapery."[30]

Dassel's description provides a glimpse into the diverse and meticulously collected gallery, highlighting the range of genres and artists. However, the notable emphasis placed on the Dutch and Flemish school also highlights a shift in taste among Danish elite during the 1750s and beyond. As emphasized by Jesper Svenningsen, Morell became an emissary of inspiration, coming particularly from France, who aligns with the broader context of the revolution in taste that was taking place in Europe during that time.[31] Embracing the change advocated by figures such as Countess de Verrue, collectors of Frederick V's time reflected a new appreciation of the Dutch painting from the 17th century.

Morell also introduced a new inventory system of objects, which demonstrates a shift towards more systematic cataloging practices. While earlier inventories contained lists of items in the order of their acquisition, he assigned objects to specific categories based on their subject matter, material, or purpose. The use of letters to designate each category (such as "a" for paintings, "b" for antiquities, or "d" for ethnographic artifacts), provided a consistent system for classifying objects and allowed for a more focused study of individual fields.[32] Morell's catalogue also contained more information about each object, including provenance, its importance in the artist's overall output, and additional descriptions. His compilation of a catalogue marked an important milestone in Danish art history, as by documentation of the

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[30] Cit. per.: B. Tøndborg, *From Kunstkammer*, 48-49.

Dassel, when describing a visit to the gallery, used the name *Det Kongelige Billedgallerie*, which, as Britta Tøndborg rightly points out, is the first example of referring to this name in a publication. The gallery inspector at the time of Dassel's visit was probably Lorenz Spengler. However, as Spengler did not introduce significant changes to the gallery's organization, the arrangement of the paintings remained as it was established by Morell.

[31] Svenningsen, *Samlingssteder*, 54.

During the reign of Frederick IV, Italian aesthetics held sway, but under the influence of Morell, in the time of Frederick V, new taste emerged in line with French fashion, characterized by a growing interest in Dutch painting. Morell's private collection, which served as a storage for his own art dealership, included works by artists such as Ruisdael, Hobbema, van Goyen, Teniers, Heda, and Cuyp. Morell's successful monopoly on the sale of paintings among courtiers further solidified his position and influence within court circles.

[32] B. Tøndborg, "From specimens, curiosities and illustrations", 64.

artworks and providing insights into their artistic styles and origins, Morell effectively became the first writer of art history in Denmark.[33]

Following Morell's death in 1771, the organization and display of the Picture Gallery remained largely unaltered for approximately two decades. The Kunstkammer, once a vibrant space, had now transformed into a mere repository for artworks, with its holdings primarily utilized for adorning the royal apartments and palaces. As Svenningsen rightly concluded, "in all, the Kunstkammer probably deserved the harsh criticism supplied by the German author Basilius von Ramdohr (1757-1822) after his visit in 1790".[34]

During his stay in the Danish capital, Ramdohr was accompanied by the renowned Danish painter Nicolai Abilgaard. Together, they embarked on a series of visits to significant art collections, including the Picture Gallery at Christiansborg. Ramdohr meticulously documented his observations and impressions in a travel diary, capturing interesting remarks on the cultural landscape of the period. His assessment of the royal gallery was, however, disappointing. He criticized the arrangement and display of paintings, suggesting that there was no distinction made between good and bad works, and that the lighting and positioning of the artworks were not given proper consideration. Ramdohr's comparison of the royal gallery to a *garde meubles* of paintings suggests that he viewed it more as a storage place for paintings rather than a well-organized picture gallery.[35]

After all, the passageway that housed Morell's gallery met a tragic fate during the devastating fire of Christiansborg Palace in 1794. In the aftermath of the fire, the salvaged paintings were temporarily placed in the palace of Amalienborg or Kunstkammer, propped against the walls without proper display. The dire state of the Picture Gallery persisted until the arrival of Johan Conrad Spengler, whose tenure overlapped with significant shifts in the perception and purpose of the picture galleries.

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[33] Svenningsen, *Samlingssteder*, 67.

[34] Svenningsen, "Publicly accessible art collections in Copenhagen during the Napoleonic era," *Journal of the History of Collections*, no. 2 (2015), 200.

[35] Friedrich Wilhelm Basilius von Ramdoh, *Studien zur Kentniss der schönen Natur, der schönen Künste, der Sitten und der Staatsverfassung auf einer Reise nach Dänemark* (Hannover: Verlag Der Helwingschen Hofbuchhandlung, 1792), 121.

3.2. Johan Conrad Spengler and Organization of the First Royal Picture Gallery in Christiansborg

During his tour around Denmark, Ramdohr not only visited the royal collection at Christiansborg, but also had the opportunity to visit home of the Swiss-born Kunstkammer inspector, Lorenz Spengler (1720-1807). Following the death of Gerhard Morell in 1771, he took over as the custodian of the royal collections, which included both the gallery and the Kunstkammer, and held that position until 1807. Spengler was the king's turner, naturalist, and collector with a passion for conchology. His private collection, consisting of paintings, drawings, engravings, minerals, and shells, was distributed across five rooms in his house[36]. Completed in the 1780s and comprising more than 100 paintings, primarily by 17th-century Dutch painters and 18th-century German painters, Spengler's collection could have been conceived as a personal supplement to the Royal Picture Gallery. It is not surprising, though, that Ramdohr visited Spengler's private gallery during his stay in Copenhagen. Exploring the inspector's collection would have been a natural extension of a visit to the royal collection, especially that the choices made by Spengler in his own collection, which included works by artists such as van Dyck, Rubens, Jordaens, Rembrandt, Steen and van Goyen, reflected the preferences of Gerhard Morell from the royal gallery during the 1750s and 1760s.[37]

Following Morell's approach, which mirrored the evolving collecting taste of the time, as well as building his own collection from the perspective of a natural scientist rather than a connoisseur, Spengler is likely to have influenced the overall image of the royal gallery during his tenure. Basing on the available documentation, catalogues, and inventories of the Royal Picture Gallery, one can conclude that Spengler did not implement significant changes in terms of arrangement and selection of artworks compared to his predecessor. Furthermore, it seems that

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[36] Carl Heinrich Vogler, *Der Künstler und Naturforscher Lorenz Spengler aus Schaffhausen: Schaffhauser Neujahrsblätter 1898 und 1899* (Schaffhausen: Verlag des historisch-antiquarischen Vereins und des Kunstvereins, 1899), 19-20.

Spengler donated his collection of shells and minerals to the king. Similarly, his collection of etchings, augmented extensively by his son, became the foundation of the Royal Collection of Graphic Art [den Kongelige Kobberstiksamling].

[37] Svenningsen, *Samlingssteder*, 100.

he did not acquire new objects for the collection with the same level of intensity as Morell.[38] This implies Spengler's focus on maintaining the existing collection rather than actively expanding it through extensive acquisitions. Hence, the next significant moment in the process of shaping the Copenhagen gallery was marked by the involvement of Johan Conrad Spengler [fig. 11].

J.C. Spengler's exposure to his father's collection, its expansion, and cataloguing would have provided him with valuable knowledge in the field of art and collecting.[39] Among his numerous travels to France, Italy, and Austria, a journey to England with Adam Hauch (1755-1838), a courtier, marshal of the Supreme Court in Copenhagen, and a collector, was of significant importance. Hauch certainly influenced Spengler's appointment as the inspector of the royal collection in 1807 and held high expectations for him in terms of managing the gallery's development.[40] Spengler served as the gallery inspector from 1807 until 1839, however his involvement with the royal collection had began much earlier. The notable contribution lies in his remarkable efforts to rescue the majority of works housed in *Der Löwen Gang* from the fire of the palace in 1794. During the subsequent reconstruction of Christiansborg, which began in 1803, he played a crucial role in overseeing the transfer of the remaining works to the preserved Kunstkammer building and participated in the collection's inventory.

When Spengler assumed his position at the court, king Frederick VI (1808-1839) had recently expanded acquisitions with three private collections of Johan Christian Bodendieck, Hans West, and Hans Bang.[41] This presented Spengler with a formidable challenge of incorporating the existing collection along with the newly acquired works. Furthermore, the new gallery of paintings was to be housed in the reconstructed Christiansborg Palace and opened to

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[38] See: Bente Gundestrup, *Det kongelige danske Kunstkammer 1737*, vol. I and II (København: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1991); Johan Conrad Spengler, *Catalog over det Kongelige Billedgalleri paa Christiansborg* (Kiöbenhavn: Trykt i Thieles Bogtrykkeri, 1827), 11.

[39] In 1809 J.C. Spengler compiled a catalogue of his father's collection (*Kort Udsigt over den Spenglerske Malerie Samling*).

[40] Villads Villadsen, *Statens Museum for Kunst 1827-1952* (København: Gyldendal, 1998), 35-36.

[41] In 1809, Frederick VI purchased 116 paintings each from the West and Bodendieck collections, including works by Rubens, Terborch and Peter de Hooch.

the public for the first time.[42] Therefore, Spengler commenced his work by meticulously studying each object within the royal collection, evaluating their suitability for display in the new exhibition space. This endeavor also encompassed the formulation of comprehensive descriptions for all the works, as a part of the collection's *catalogue raisonné*, commissioned by the king in 1821. The 600-page catalogue, completed in 1827, provided accounts of 1,300 paintings, with 900 of them being showcased at the Royal Picture Gallery [Det Kongelige Billedgallerie].[43]

Spengler's contribution to the gallery coincided with a significant shift in the approach to the collection arrangement, as the focus transitioned from purely aesthetic considerations to more scientific and systematic organization. In his introduction to the catalogue, Spengler elucidates his approach: "the order of the collection must not depend on random factors, but rather be grounded in scientific principles. That is why [in the catalogue] painters have been arranged according to the schools, and every school according to the sequence of time. However, regarding the hanging of the works, this accuracy could not be achieved. It is true that the schools remained separate, but in determining the location of individual pieces, consideration had to be given to their size, the lighting they required, and the impression within the overall sight of the entire wall to be covered with paintings".[44]

Hence, according to Villadsen, the primary endeavor was to establish an art museum that encompassed representation from all artistic schools.[45] Spengler aptly identified this challenge, associated with the chronological arrangement of artworks. While the attempt to acquaint

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[42] In 1806, twelve years after the fire that destroyed the first Christiansborg palace, king Christian VII initiated the construction of the second Christiansborg. The new palace was designed in the classicist style by C.F. Hansen and was completed in 1828 during the reign of Frederick VI. Following the adoption of the constitution in Denmark in 1849, the first Danish parliament began to convene in the palace. However, the Christiansborg stood for only 56 years, as it was engulfed by fire in 1884.

[43] The catalogue does not include the royal collection of portraits from the Frederiksborg Castle, as it was compiled in a separate inventory by a commission appointed for this purpose.

[44] Spengler, *Catalog over det Kongelige Billedgalleri*, 11.

Spengler embarked on developing more comprehensive catalogue that reflected his scholarly and methodical approach to the system of classification and descriptions of artworks. He placed particular emphasis on the catalogue's purpose of assessing the artistic value of the artwork, including identification of their notable strengths and weaknesses. To achieve this, he provided detailed descriptions of works and motifs, drawing upon historical knowledge. Spengler also introduced pocket guides, which were first published in 1834, containing a comprehensive list of works in the collection, organized by author, title, and date of creation.

[45] Villadsen, *Statens Museum for Kunst*, 35-36.

viewers with the most prominent European painting schools and to elucidate the trajectory of their development underpinned the gallery's design, its practical execution encountered certain limitations due to gaps in the collection, stemming from the absence of paintings by certain masters or specific periods. Although the hanging of works within the gallery followed the organization by schools, adhering to topographical arrangement, Spengler incorporated sketches and copies of paintings, deemed instrumental in supplementing the aforementioned gaps within the collection. Whilst this inclusion was initially intended to ensure a cohesive narrative of the development of art, it later became one of the main points of criticism regarding Spengler's arrangement.

The newly established gallery, situated on the top floor of the Christiansborg Palace, comprised 10 main rooms (7 facing the castle yard, with a sidelight from 19 windows, and 3 facing the royal garden, lighted through 10 windows) [fig. 12].[46] Strategic placement of the gallery allowed for an effective use of a natural light, with side lighting predominantly coming from the east. Artworks were densely arranged, frame by frame, covering the entire wall surface, allowing for the simultaneous display of over 900 paintings. According to Louis Mourier, J.C Spengler's biographer, the gallery rooms lacked paneling or even plastered walls; instead, the raw walls were painted with gray paint, and pine slats were affixed to them for hanging the paintings.[47]

The gallery hanging arrangement was organized according to the schools: within 7 rooms were exhibited Italian (160), Flemish (173), French (23) and German (79) schools, while the remaining 3 rooms were dedicated to the Dutch (353) school. Spengler also introduced subdivisions within the Italian section into distinct schools: Roman, Florentine, Neapolitan, Lombard, and Venetian. Within these rooms, visitors had the opportunity to see works attributed at that time to such masters as Giorgione, Bellini, Titian, Correggio, Giulio Romano, Caravaggio, Filippino Lippi and Andrea Mantegna. While Spengler approached the organization of the gallery with a scientific mindset, by prioritizing the systematic arrangement according to schools he demonstrated a degree of enthusiasm and less strict adherence to scientific rigor when

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[46] Description of the Gallery is based on the ground floor plan and Spengler's catalogue, as well as publications which examined this subject matter. See: Villads Villadsen, *Statens Museum for Kunst* (1998); Peter Hertz, "Malerisamlingens tilvækst" (1926); and Charlotte Christensen, *Guldalderens billedverden* (København: Gyldendal, 2019).

[47] Mourier, *Johan Conrad Spenglers Levnet*, 19.

attributing works to artists such as Raphael, Michelangelo, or Leonardo.[48] Furthermore, in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the achievements of Italian schools, he also included copies of significant pieces, like Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* or Michelangelo's *Leda*.

The next two rooms were dedicated to the Flemish school, with consideration given to chronology by placing older artists in the first room and younger artists in the second. This section included works by van Dyck, David Teniers, with 7 paintings attributed to each of the them, and 15 works recognized as by Rubens. The subsequent room was divided into the French and German schools, with the French paintings displayed on the dimly lit entrance wall. Among 23 paintings attributed to French artists, notable pieces included *Moses* by Nicolas Poussin or *Portrait of Izabela Bourbon* by François Clouet. The German section had more extensive representation, showcasing a rich selection of works by Lucas Cranach, Pieter Pourbus, and Hans Holbein, as well as copies of Albrecht Dürer's works. Three rooms dedicated to the Dutch school showcased a diverse range of subjects and artists, including: landscapes by Saeftleven, Everdingen, Hobbema, Jacob Ruisdael and Jan Hackaert; portraits by Jan Victors, Ferdinand Bol, Jacob van der Does and van der Helst; along with interiors by Pieter de Hooch, Abraham Storck, Simon de Vlieger and Gerard Hoockgeest. The central masterpiece of this section was Rembrandt's *Christ in Emmaus.*

In a significant decision, Spengler chose to dedicate two smaller rooms, situated between the German section and the storage room, to display Danish art (113 works). This marked a significant milestone, as it was the first time that Danish art was included within the gallery space. The first room featured works by artists of the 17th and 18th centuries, representing earlier periods of Danish art, and the second, although smaller in size, focused on painters contemporary to Spengler, such as Nicolai Abildgaard (1744-1809), Jens Juel (1745-1802), Elias Meyer (1763-1809) and Samuel Mygind (1784-1817).[49] However, it is important to note that the treatment of Danish painting in both the catalogue and gallery, was more general in nature.

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[48] Among such attributions are, for example, *St. Catherine* by Leonardo da Vinci (now recognized as the work of Bernardino Luini, KMSsp37), *Portrait of a Young Woman* by Bronzino (now attributed to Federico Barocci, KMSsp44), or *Venus and Cupid* attributed by Spengler to Veronese (now to Simone Peterzano, KMSsp148). The remark regarding the problem of attribution and copying also applies to other schools represented within Spengler's gallery. Most of his attributions have already been questioned by such scholars as Rumohr or Høyen, and have not been upheld.

[49] The first room housed also portraits of art gallery inspectors and artists. However, in 1870, these portraits were relocated to Rosenborg Castle and subsequently to the Frederiksborg Castle.

Spengler acknowledged in the introduction to his catalogue that although Danish painters did not form an actual school, nevertheless they should form a special department within the gallery.[50] Consequently, the section devoted to Danish painting in the catalogue was titled Danish Masters [Danske Mestere] rather than Danish School [Danske Skole], reflecting the absence of a cohesive artistic movement or style associated exclusively with Danish art.

Among 40 artists recognized by Spengler as Danish Masters, only 15 were native Danes, while the rest hailed from the Netherlands, Sweden, or France, commissioned by the royal court in Copenhagen.[51] Thus, within the Danish section, visitors could appreciate works of Karel van Mander, Abraham Wuchters and Cornelius Gijsbrecht, who were employed by kings Christian IV, Frederick III, and Christian V. Despite the stylistic differences arising from, among others, affiliation with distinct painting schools, their production for the Danish court was sufficient criteria for Spengler.[52]

While the establishment of the Royal Picture Gallery and implementation of the new cataloguing system were undoubtedly significant achievements resulting from years of diligent work, Spengler's gallery had not stand without critique. Although in a review from *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende* significant changes were acknowledged: "The Royal Gallery in its previous location had limited space, hindering the ability to exhibit paintings in a scholarly manner or provide adequate lighting [...]. Even more challenging was the dispersion of numerous exceptional paintings across various royal palaces, rendering them even less accessible than the gallery itself"; at the same time the review underscores its disparity in comparison to foreign counterparts: "The royal painting gallery is a truly glorious national treasure, hitherto almost

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[50] Spengler, *Catalog over det Kongelige Billedgalleri*, 8.

[51] Hertz, "Malerisamlingens tilvækst," 358-390.

Already during Spengler's tenure as the gallery keeper, the collection of Danish paintings steadily grew, primarily due to the king's regular purchases at the annual exhibitions at the Academy of Fine Arts. However, very few of these acquisitions were actually exhibited in the gallery. Instead, most of the paintings were destined to decorate the royal residences or were delegated directly into storage.

[52] Christensen, *Guldalderens billedverden*, 51-52.

In the Danish part of the gallery, visitors could see the portrait of Christian II by Michiel Sittow, paintings by Karel van Mander III and Wolfgang Heimbach, selection of portraits by J.S. Wahl, Otto Kyhl, Balthasar Denner and Carl Gustaf Pilo; then followed paintings by Abildgaard, Juel, Meyer, Erik Pauelsen and, the youngest of all, Samuel Mygind.

unknown […], and yet it may not rival the most extensive Italian, French and German collections, either in terms of the quantity of works, their excellence, and size."[53]

As Villadsen points out, even if Spengler brought order to the chaos, he did so in a doctrinal and uncritical manner. One aspect that drew frequent criticism of his contemporaries was the inclusion of copies in the display, purportedly aimed at providing a comprehensive representation of the development of painting. In practice, however, the scientific order and organization of paintings were often difficult to discern amidst the tightly arranged displays. In addition, the problem of incorrect attributions was often pointed out, as reported by Frances Williams Wynn, who criticized the gallery's poor hanging arrangement, inadequate lighting and the low height of the rooms, as well as works wrongly attributed to Raphael or Correggio.[54]

The issue of accessibility of the gallery to the general public, particularly during its early years, was also a subject of concern. According to Mette Houlberg Rung, although the royal collection of paintings was made available to the public with the opening of the gallery in Christiansborg on 11th June 1827, there were limitations as to when visitors could actually get an access. These challenges ranged from limited visiting hours to the inconvenience of obtaining tickets.[55]

Most of these aspects remained unchanged until the death of Spengler in March of 1839. The gallery, along with the arrangement of the rooms and placement of individual paintings, remained the same as in 1827. Significant changes were about to come with the appointment of a new inspectors, Niels Laurits Høyen and Christian Jürgensen Thomsen.

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[53] Unknown author, "Review of the Royal Picture Gallery at Christiansborg," *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende*, no. 29 (1827), 5-7.

[54] Villadsen, *Statens Museum for Kunst*, 42.

[55] M. Houlberg Rung, *Negotiating Experiences. Visiting Statens Museum for Kunst*, PhD dissertation (University of Leicester, 2013), 61.
Guests were only allowed to visit the gallery on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., during specific periods from April to May and from October to November. Additionally, admission tickets were required, but they could not be purchased on-site as the ticket office was located elsewhere.

Fig. 6

Title page of *Museum Regium* with a view of Kunstkammer building in the background. Source: Henrik Carl Bering Liisberg, *Kunstkammeret. Dets Stiftelse og ældste historie*, København 1897

Fig. 7

View of the Christiansborg Palace, 1761, Royal Library's Collection of Prints and Photographs (Kunstkammer building marked in yellow)

Fig. 8

Johann Salomon Wahl, *Gerhard Morell*, 1704-1765, oil on canvas, Statens Museum for Kunst

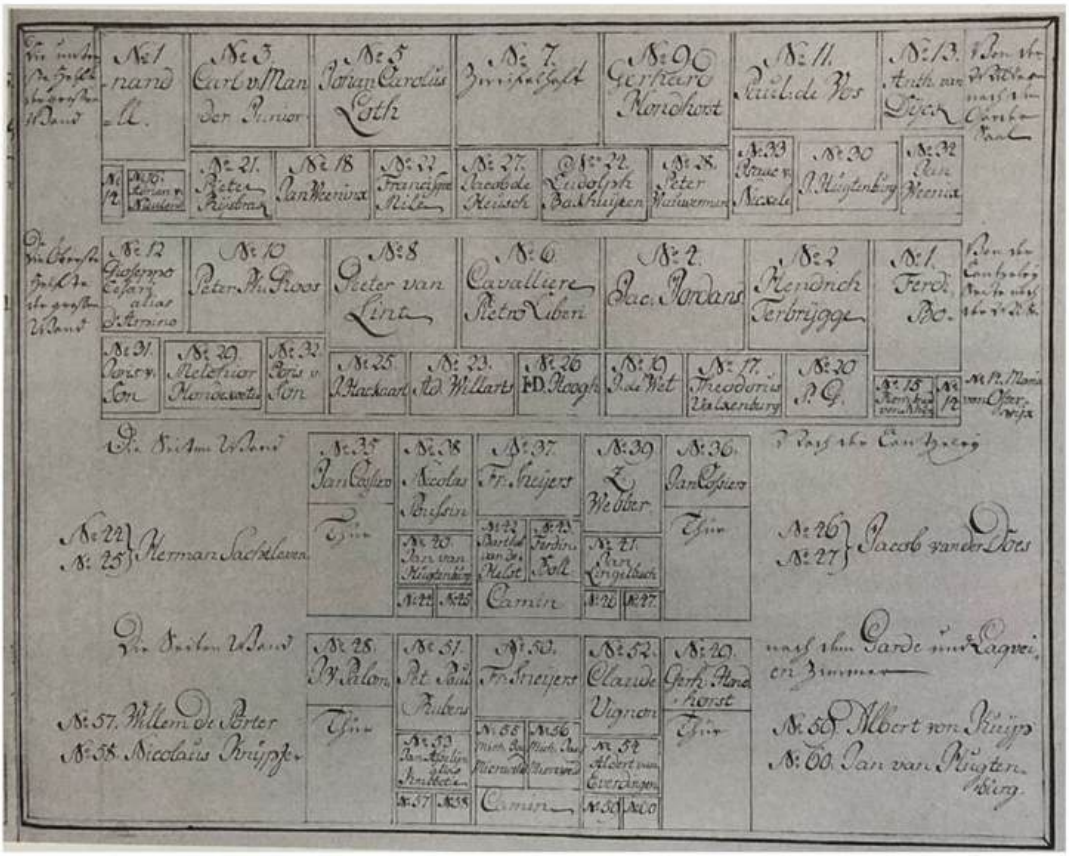

Fig. 9

Floor plan of the Royal Kunstkammer in Copenhagen, 1660s. Source: Henrik Carl Bering Liisberg, *Kunstkammeret. Dets Stiftelse og ældste historie*, København 1897

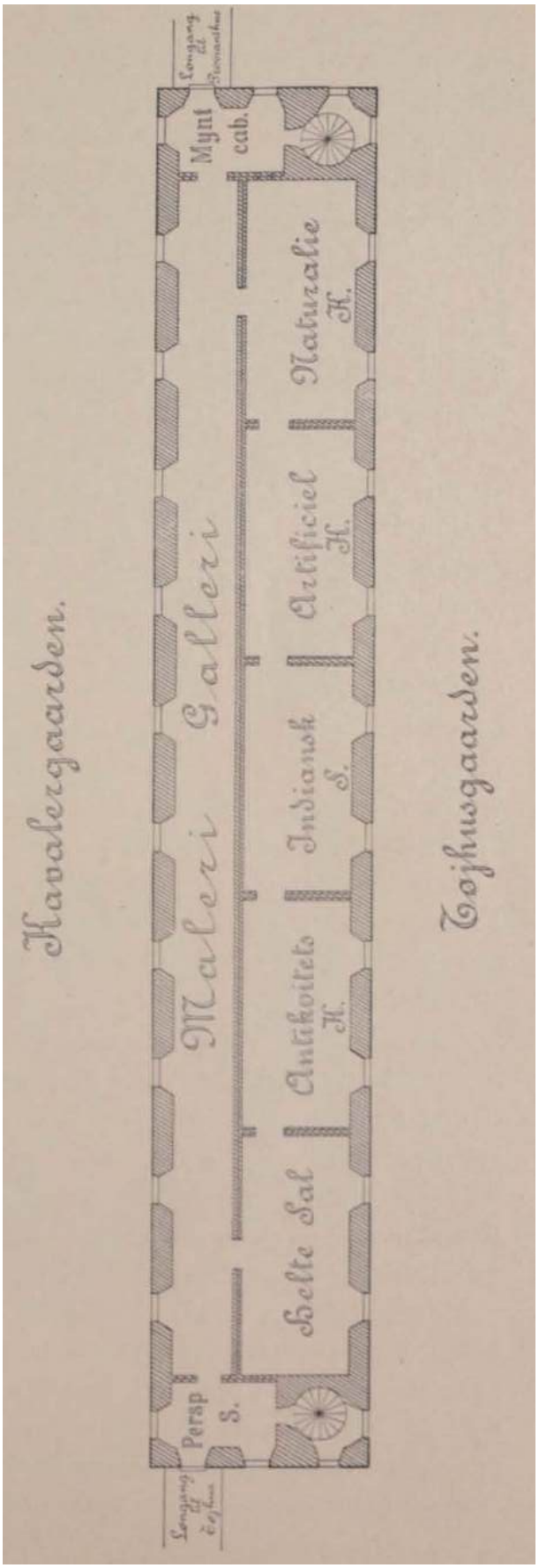

Fig. 10
Gerhard Morell's plan of the hanging in the Royal Picture Gallery at Christiansborg, 1767, Statens Museum for Kunst Archive

Fig. 11

Johann Ludwig Lund, *J.C. Spengler. Keeper of the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities*, 1834, oil on canvas, Statens Museum for Kunst

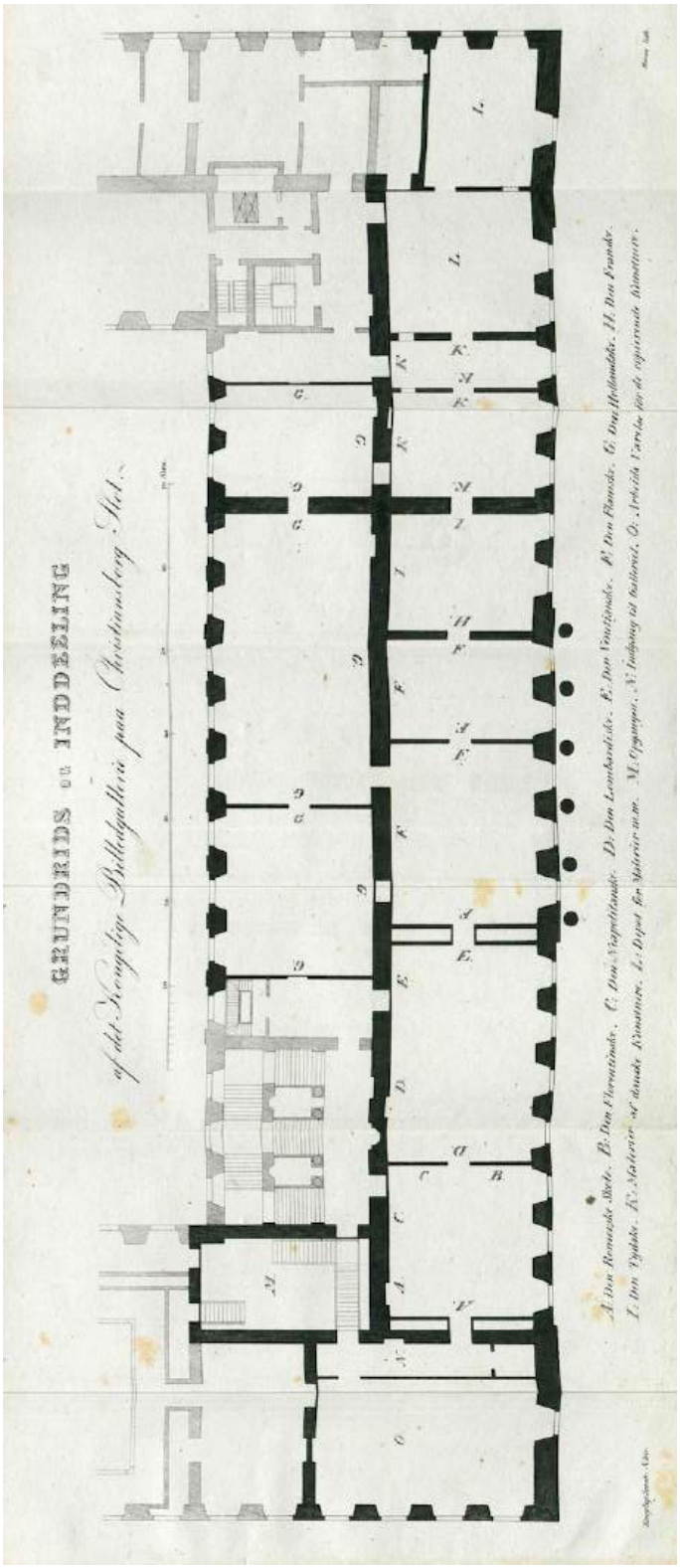

Fig. 12
J.C. Spengler, Plan of the Picture Gallery at Christiansborg, 1827, Statens Museum for Kunst Archive

IV Niels Laurits Høyen. Art Historian and Museologist

The moment is when the man is there, the right man, the man of the moment.

Søren Kierkegaard[1]

4.1. Portrait of the Art Historian

"When we reflect on Høyen, our thoughts first stop at his lectures. For anyone who remembers him, he was primarily a docent […]. Høyen's lectures occupy a distinctive […] position in the history of our spiritual life; they must also be called the flower of his intellectual and scholarly contributions."[2] The memories of Julius Lange (1838–1896), a student of Høyen, an art historian, and a critic, although imbued with a certain degree of admiration, evoke the most characteristic aspect of Høyen's endeavors, through which he indelibly etched his name in Danish art history. His lectures not only left an indelible mark on a generation of artists but also laid the foundation for the emergence of academic art history in Denmark, and remain a subject of examinations in scholarly discourse. Lange's recollection of Høyen's lectures at the Hall of Antiquities at Charlottenborg paint a vivid picture of events that captured considerable attention and were suffused with an almost festive and spirited ambiance [fig. 13]. This is how Lange described them: "he held a definite fondness of the Hall of Antiquities at Charlottenborg. Whether he spoke of ancient or modern sculpture, architecture or painting, he would have the Laocoon in front of him, or the Parthenon [frieze] at his back. […] In any case, he had to have good space and light. His audience was usually up to 200 people and often exceeded this number. […] Høyen was organizing a whole presentation of selected copperplates from the collections of friends and acquaintances. [Among his attendees] was first and foremost a large group of […] artists, […] young people who may have heard the famous names [of artists] for

[1] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Moment and late writing*, eds. and trans. Howard Vong, Edna Vong (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 340.

[2] Julius Lange, "N.L. Høyen som Docent og Forfatter," in *Udvalgte skrifter af Julius Lange*, ed. Georg Brandes (København: Det nordiske forlag, 1901), 207-209.

the first time, […] art collectors and art lovers; […] scientists, professors and writers […]. There is finally a numerous circle of women. Høyen has undoubtedly placed great value on having female listeners and has fully understood the significance of fostering a sense of art appreciation and interest among them." [fig. 14][3]

In the context of Lange's memoirs, it comes as no surprise that the most renowned portrait of the Danish art historian, painted by Wilhelm Marstrand (1810–1873) in 1868, depicts Høyen during one of the lectures [fig. 15].[4] In this portrait, which, by the standards of Danish portraiture of the time, boasts substantial dimensions (129 x 98 cm), Høyen holds a central position, stands tall and gazes forward, with his left hand outstretched in a gesture which can be interpreted as a rhetorical cue, signifying a moment of presentation and engagement with a specific subject. Høyen is portrayed within a lecture hall, assuming the role of a speaker and rhetorician. The subject of his discourse, as indicated by the prints arranged on the table and displayed on easels behind him, is the art of the Italian Renaissance. The choice of position, particularly the gesticulation, is a result of character study, as evidenced by Marstrand's sketch, which indicates selection of the most persuasive gesture [fig. 16]. Høyen's raised hand effectively captures the viewer's attention and, with the positioning of the fingers, guides the gaze towards the figure depicted in the print, which can be identified as St. Paul from Raphael's *St. Cecilia Altarpiece* (today in the collection of the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna). Behind Høyen's back, a larger print can also be discerned as Raphael's *The Disputation of the Sacrament* from Stanza della Segnatura in Vatican. Reference to Raphael's works as the background for Høyen's portrayal appears deliberate, yet it raises intriguing questions. Why did Marstrand opt not to feature works by Danish artists of the time championed by Høyen? Furthermore, the absence of any reference to his advocacy for national art, a topic of considerable debate and controversy during that period, prompts further inquiry.

In pursuit of a conceivable answer, at least three aspects arise. The initial explanation derives from Høyen's own investigations into ancient and Renaissance art, notably with a focus

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[3] Ibidem.

The young painter Eleonore Christine Tschernings recalled Høyen as a patron of young artists, as for instance, with his support she had the opportunity to copy in 1842 the *Crucifixion* attributed to Agostino Carracci's from the Royal Picture Gallery.

[4] This portrait belonged to Høyen's wife, Edele Birgitte Westengaard (1799–1883) and was donated by her to the National Gallery of Denmark in 1870 (inv. no. KMS870).

The portrait was appreciated at the exhibition in Charlottenborg, where it received excellent reviews.

See: "Kunstudstilling i Charlottenborg," *Middelfart Avis*, 6 April, 1869.

on Raphael. His interest in antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, akin to many scholars of his era, was ignited during his youthful sojourn in Italy. He contemplated Raphael's works, fully cognizant of his limitations in taking first steps as a scholar, as indicated in a letter to his fiancé: "You would also like to hear something about Raphael and Michelangelo? […] Let me delve deeper into their works first; it is so delightful to appreciate them, yet so difficult and elusive to truly comprehend them."[5] Among all the artists extensively studied by Høyen, Raphael holds a singular and distinguished position. To such an extent that, among all his published writings, the sole monograph dedicated to an artist is on Raphael. In a lecture delivered two years prior to Marstrand's portrait, Høyen expressed admiration for the harmony of *The Dispute*, noting how "every element seamlessly integrates into a magnificent unity, allowing one to discern the subtle distinction between the celestial and the terrestrial realms."[6] In reference to the adjacent *The School of Athens*, he highlighted the painter's adeptness at grouping figures "in a manner akin to musical harmonies, a skill which Raphael had mastered to the highest degree."[7]

This perspective might also be connected to the second facet, which pertains to the interpretation of Marstrand's portrait as a glorification of Høyen's role as the precursor of art history in Denmark.[8] He emerges as a connoisseur of art in its entirety, demonstrating his comprehension of its traditions and foundations. In this sense, the portrayal encapsulates a timeless representation of a scholar who lays the groundwork for an academic discipline within the university context. It could also serve as an image that might bolster Høyen's standing beyond any debates and critiques, portraying him as a proficient authority on art in a broader sense. In this regard, the composition of Marstrand's portrait acquires additional significance as it aligns with the tradition of portraying scholars or artists (e.g. Ferdinand Bol's *Portrait of a Young Scholar* or William Dobson's *Portrait of Sir Edward Walker*) [fig. 17, fig. 18].

Lastly, Marstrand's personal convictions, elucidated by Sally Schlosser Schmidt in her article examining his perspectives on national art, also might have played an equally important

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[5] Niels Laurits Høyen to his fiancé, 6 April 1824, *Rejsebreve fra N.L. Høyen til forældrene og hustruen*, NKS 2385 kvart, Royal Library, Copenhagen.

[6] Niels Laurits Høyen, *Rafael. Optegnelser efter prof. N.L. Høyens Forelæsninger i Vinteren 1866-67* (Kjøbenhavn: Forlagt af Th. Lind, 1875), 102.

[7] Ibidem, 112.

[8] Høyen's position as the pioneer of Danish art history is elucidated by Hans Dam Christensen in a volume dedicated to the critical examination of the history of the discipline in Denmark. See: Hans Dam Christensen, *Forskydningens Kunst. Kritiske bidrag til kunsthistoriens historie* (København: Multivers, 2001).

role. Schlosser Schmidt references a letter from Rome written by Marstrand to his friend and fellow painter Constantin Hansen (1804–1880). In his letter, Marstrand evidently dissociates himself from Høyen's aspiration to establish a distinctly national art intertwined with geopolitical concerns: "What do all these ideas of politics, nationality and grain duties have to do with painterly impact and the beauty of lines? What does it mean that art should be national? Does this mean that it should be politically Danish, extending from the Kongeå to the North Sea, depicting only those subjects found therein? […] No, just as the same sun shines above the entire world, so is art without all bounds; it serves only Truth and Beauty. […] I shall not let myself be confused by these passing tales of Scandinavism, constitutions and such matters, for they have not one whit to do with the eternal laws of beauty."[9] Marstrand's attitude defined in this way, as suggested by Birgitte von Folsach, could have also influenced the composition of Hoyen's portrait and indicate the artist's distancing himself from the national narrative.[10]

However, Marstrand's idea behind this portrait may be somewhat more intricate, especially when considering Høyen's central position within the context of *The Dispute*. Much like in Raphael's compositions, gesture assumes a significant role within Marstrand's portrait, profoundly influencing the subject's overall stance. Notably, Høyen's hand gesture mirrors that of a figure from Raphael's *Dispute* (an artwork which Høyen scrutinized while studying Raphael's fresco in the Vatican, as confirmed by the extant sketch found in his notebook) [fig. 19]. Just as the figure of man that particularly engaged Høyen in Raphael's work — who notably directs attention to the written word as essential within ongoing theological debate — Høyen became a central figure in the impassioned discourse about the form and purpose of art that swept through the Danish art scene in between 1840s and 1860s.

Such interpretation highlights two fundamental aspects of Høyen's development: firstly, the exploration of the foundations of art history and the dissemination of this knowledge through lectures; and secondly, the active advocacy for contemporary art and its national essence within the context of the heated discourse prevailing in Denmark at the time. A grasp of these two

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[9] Cit. per: Sally Schlosser Schmidt, "National kunst & national kunst. Wilhelm Marstrand og P.C. Skovgaards opfattelser af national kunst omkring 1854," *Perspective* Journal, September 2020, https://perspectivejournal.dk/national-kunst-national-kunstwilhelm-marstrand-og-pc-skovgaards-opfattelser-af-national-kunst [access online: 16.05.2023].
A transcription of Marstrand's entire letter to Constantin Hansen can be found in the Royal Library Digital Collection: https://tekster.kb.dk/text/letters-002257981-000-shoot-L0022579810000025 [access online: 16.05.2023].

[10] Birgitte von Folsach, "Tæt på.Wilhelm Marstrands portrætter," in *Wilhelm Marstrand. Den første fortæller*, eds. Jesper Svenningsen and Anne Marie Villumsen (Toreby: Narayana Press, 2020), 132-137.

pillars will provide better understanding of Høyen's role as the inspector of the Royal Picture Gallery in Copenhagen.

4.1.1. The emerging scholar

Høyen was born in the age of prosperity in Denmark, which was coming to an end at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Although he received a good education, typical for young bourgeois men, his further formation fell within the period marked by transformation, numerous crises, and conflicts. In January 1821, when he applied for admission to the Academy, there were no courses dedicated to the history of art. Instead, he attended lectures on anatomy and perspective, as well as a drawing course.[11] At that time, the most prominent figure at the Academy was Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783–1853), who having studied under Jacques-Louis David in Paris, assumed the role of a professor in 1818 and later served as the Academy's director (from 1827 to 1829). Throughout Høyen's tenure as a student, Eckersberg's plein-air studies gained significant momentum, and his art, known for its "precision, and […] remarkable freshness in depicting both form and colour" had a profound and lasting impact on young Høyen.[12]

Apart from the Academy, there were limited venues in Copenhagen for the aspiring scholar where he could directly study works of art. The Royal Gallery at Christiansborg was scheduled to open to the public in 1827, and access to the Royal Kunstkammer, which housed a picture gallery, was restricted by both an entrance fee and a cap on the number of visitors, allowing in only twelve individuals at a time. Nevertheless, Høyen was able to avail himself of certain resources. This included collections of cast at the Academy and engravings held within the Royal Library, as well as artworks contained within the private collections of Hans West (1758-1811) and Adam Gottlob Moltke (1710-1792). However, Høyen swiftly recognized the need to access more extensive resources, participate in broader discourse, and explore larger art collections in order to get fully immersed in a profound understanding of art. The result was an

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[11] Philip Weilbach, "N.l. Høyen, Paa 100 aarsdagen for hans godsel," in *Kunstbladet*, ed. Emil Hannover (København: Winkel & Magnussens Forlag, 1898), 163.

[12] Ibidem.

On C.W. Eckersberg see: Kasper Monrad, ed., *Christopher Wilhelm Eckersberg* (København: Prestel Publishing, 2000).

extended sojourn abroad, during which he devoted three years to the study of art in Germany, Austria and Italy.

In a letter to his parents from Munich in 1823, Høyen outlined the objectives of his journey: "The aim of my travel is to personally encounter works of art, become acquainted with contemporary artists, and, if feasible, juxtapose artistic monuments with the most renowned literature on the subject. Should fortune favor me and should I possess the requisite capability, upon my return, I will be prepared to delve into the art history of a nation as culturally abundant in art and literature as Denmark."[13]

Numerous travel journals, primarily archived in the Royal Library in Copenhagen and, to a considerably lesser extent, at the National Museum of Denmark, offer riveting insights into the formative years of the young art historian. While a comprehensive study of these journals, a venture yet to be undertaken in Denmark, would undoubtedly merit a dedicated publication, they nonetheless provide a window into Høyen's early research methodologies. During his extensive visits to museums and collections, he meticulously catalogued artworks and recorded the names of artists based on the schools within which their works were exhibited. Subsequently, he revisited these entries, augmenting them with notes extracted from his extensive readings. Thus, his journals unveil a two-fold approach: an ardent ambition to accumulate a wide array of material while simultaneously foreshadowing his intention to bestow heightened scrutiny upon select artists in future research.[14] Furthermore, his observations encompassed sketching and detailed descriptions of paintings, sculptures, and architectural features, accompanied by insightful comparisons between various styles and periods. Høyen displayed unwavering dedication to the task of describing, comparing, and analyzing works of art. For instance, when discussing the frescoes from Campo Santo in Pisa, he remarked: "they are certainly not as beautiful as the works of the Greeks; even an untrained eye will readily discover numerous

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[13] Cit. per: Kirsten Agerbæk, *Høyen mellem klassicisme og romantik. Om idégrundlaget for N.L. Høyens virke for kunsten i fortid og samtid* (Esbjerg: Sydjysk Universitetsforlag, 1984), 128.

[14] Høyen was also influenced by Rumohr's *Italienische Forschungen* (1827). Ussing, in his biography, highlights that this book was the first instance of thorough and conscientious treatment of older Italian art, precisely as Høyen himself advocated. Høyen held Rumohr in high regard for his "keen and reliable observation, relentless investigative diligence, incisive critique and a rigorous, logical approach." See: Johan Louis Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned med Bilag af Breve* (Kjøbenhavn: Samfundet til den danske Litteraturs Fremme, 1872), 159.

imperfections in them."[15] The juxtaposition between antiquity and renaissance was a recurring theme in Høyen's perspective at the time. While antiquity served as a foundation of his scholarly pursuits, yet his notes also reveal genuine enthusiasm for, among others, the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel.

He diligently pursued the study of architecture, drawing detailed plans and facades, which would later manifest itself in his research on Danish architecture and extensive travels throughout Denmark in order to catalogue architectural monuments.[16] From Florence, he penned his impressions of architecture in Verona: "The cathedral is magnificent; covered with marble […] how much novelty these proud masses bring to the history of art! […] How wonderful are the churches of Verona, adorned with marble […], and what wonderful paintings hang everywhere, not only by the divine Titian but also by masters unknown anywhere else in Europe, such as Carpaccio [...] or the delightful Lorenzini."[17] Høyen further refines his efforts in art critique and his aesthetic perspectives, with a particular focus on style, composition, and expression of artwork. Although his early writings emphasize the impression rather than technique, it is noteworthy that he actively engaged in the study of drawing and painting, which proves his aspiration to acquire practical proficiency in artistic techniques, aligning his theoretical insights with hands-on experience.[18]

In his research, he directed focus towards painting and, to a significant degree, architecture. Sculpture, while touched upon in his lectures and reviews, never assumed a primary role. Although sculpture garnered his admiration, as indicated during the Italian trip, he also acknowledged certain limitations in studying it: "It seems to me that something dawns in my soul when I look at statues, but in fact, they are a thousand times harder to understand than

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[15] Cit. per: Erik Drigsdahl, *N.L. Høyen i Italien 1823-25: rejsebrevene udgivet med en indledning og kommentarer* (København: Forum, 1974), 17.

[16] Høyen was a pioneer in conducting official inspection trips on behalf of the state to evaluate Denmark's historical art collections, churches, castles, and manor houses. In 1861, he assumed the role of chairman of the commission established for this purpose, where his judgment regarding historical and artistic value played a crucial role in shaping restoration policies.

[17] Drigsdahl, *N.L. Høyen i Italien*, 17.

[18] Ussing mentioned in the biography that Høyen took painting classes in Dresden. However, I was not able to find any sources in the Dresden Academy's archives to confirm this information. It is though possible that these lessons were private, as Høyen was known to have frequently visited artists' studios. Nevertheless, it is evident that he had a keen interest in gaining practical knowledge about colour and its application, as his library encompassed a wide range of materials related to the theory of colour.

paintings. Despite their stillness, they possess an enigmatic quality, distanced from our comprehension; the grandeur, magnificence, and purity that emanate from them is often shrouded in a mist of archaeological glosses. I may never understand art, but I love it."[19]

Upon his return to Denmark in 1825, Høyen faced the challenge of applying his overseas studies into practical pursuits, given the unfavorable employment opportunities at the time. There was no available professorship at the Academy, and the stewardship of the royal collections remained in Spengler's hands. Consequently, Høyen directed his efforts towards initiatives aimed at establishing the Art Society [Kunstforeningen], drawing inspiration from a similar society in Hamburg.[20] He commenced publishing in the *Nordic Journal of History, Literature, and Art* [*Nordisk Tidsskrift for Historie, Litteratur og Kunst*] and actively engaged in pursuits at the Academy. As a result, in October 1826, he was granted the opportunity to deliver trial lectures on art history (a practice he continued until 1828), and in 1829 he became the successor to professor Niels Iversen Schow (1754-1830), serving as a lecturer in history and mythology, and subsequently, incorporating art history into his teaching. From 1833 onwards, he was granted complete autonomy to lecture on art history and mythology, and over time, he consolidated his position within the Academy, eventually becoming a significant voice in the realm of academic reforms.[21] Starting in 1828, he also embarked on the task of cataloguing the portrait collection at

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[19] Drigsdahl, *N.L. Høyen i Italien*, 50-51.

In his subsequent reflections on sculpture, Høyen would primarily focus on Thorvaldsen, dedicating considerable attention to his works and a project of his museum in Copenhagen.

[20] As early as 1818, Johan Christian Fick, the commissioner of the armed forces and Høyen's travel companion to Italy, conceived the idea of establishing an art society in Copenhagen. Upon returning from his journey across Germany in 1825, Fick successfully assembled a group of professors from the Academy in Copenhagen, including Johan Ludwig Lund, Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, Gustav Friedrich von Hetsch, Jens Peter Møller, Just Mathias Thiele and Høyen to form the Art Society as an initially temporary organization, which formally acquired official status in 1827. Høyen served as a board member in the period between 1826-1827. Subsequently, from 1828 to 1829, he became a member of the artistic committee, and from 1836 to 1838, he served as a member of various evaluation committees.

[21] Ferdinand Meldahl and Peter Johansen, *Det kongelige Akademi for de skjønne kunster 1700-1904* (Kjøbenhavn: H. Hagerups boghandel, 1904), 203-205.

When the Academy was officially brought under administration of the Ministry of Education in 1849, Høyen played a role on the committee overseeing this transition. Academy reports from the 1850s also indicate his involvement in committees responsible for the reforms, that discussed, for instance, membership criteria, regulations for medal competitions and admission to the Academy.

For a comprehensive history of the Academy, see: Anneli Fuchs and Emma Salling, eds., *Kunstakademiet 1754-2004*, (København: Arkitektens Forl, 2004).

Frederiksborg Castle, eventually overseeing its comprehensive reorganization (a large part of the collection was later lost in a fire in 1859). Concurrently, he embarked on journeys to various Danish provinces, where he gathered materials for a compilation of the first Danish history of art.[22]

At the height of his career, Høyen held esteemed positions as a professor at the Academy, the director of the Royal Picture Gallery, and a docent at the Copenhagen University. Insights into his distinguished status might be drawn from the recollections of the painter Eleonore Tschernings (1817-1890): "Høyen's family enjoyed cordial relations with the most esteemed households in the city […] owing to Høyen's exceptional talent and the high regard in which he was held for his profound erudition […]. Every Friday, a group of 6 to 10 of the professor's acquaintances convened [at his home], engaging in lively discussions concerning politics, art, and current events."[23]

Høyen played a central role in shaping public discourse on art, influencing decisions related to the acquisition and exhibition of artworks in art associations and museums. Through his contributions extended to delivering lectures, as well as writing catalogues, articles and reviews, he laid the groundwork for the formalization of art history as a scholarly discipline in Denmark. His impact was most pronounced in two distinct domains: Danish medieval architecture and contemporary Danish art. He is credited with coining the term "Eckersberg school" and offering a comprehensive delineation of the aesthetic attributes that came to characterize the era now widely acknowledged as the Danish Golden Age.[24]

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[22] Weilbach, "N.l. Høyen," 164-165.

Unfortunately, Høyen never completed a comprehensive written history of art in Denmark. Although a substantial portion of his notes and collected materials have survived and today they are preserved in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Only some of his thoughts were expressed in lectures, and even among these, not all were fully documented in writing. In fact, many of his lectures were never recorded at all. For instance, for certain lectures, all that remains are lists of artists' names and the titles of their works.

[23] Julius Clausen, ed., *Memoirer og Breve VIII. Eleonore Christine Tschernings efterladte Papirer* (København: August Bang, 1967), 106-107.

[24] Erik Mortensen, "Omrking N.L. Høyen som kunstkritiker," in *En bog om kunst til Else Kai Sass*, ed. Hakon Lund (København: Forum, 1978), 13.

4.1.2. Høyen's Views on Art

An in-depth reconstruction of Høyen's views on art would exceed the scope of this dissertation, not only due to the wide range of topics that captured his interest and the undertakings he embarked upon but also because of the inconsistencies and transformations resulting from his development as a scholar.[25] Nonetheless, such detailed examination does not line up with the primary objectives of this study; therefore, Høyen's viewpoints will be examined in a more concise manner, with a focus on their relevance within the context of his contributions to the development of Denmark's National Gallery.

Among the vast array of source material, Høyen's lectures undoubtedly stand out as particularly pertinent for analysis, though regrettably, only a part of these lectures were systematically compiled, and for many, just disjointed notes have endured. However, equally valuable are Høyen's reviews of exhibitions at Charlottenborg, which delve into contemporary art, including works of artists who were part of Høyen's lecture circle. Notably, Charlottenborg also served as the primary venue for the acquisition of paintings intended for the Royal Picture Gallery. In this context, examining two particular reviews of exhibitions from 1828 and 1838 will not only provide insights into Høyen's views on art but also unveil their development over time.

In the early review from 1828, Høyen adheres to the traditional academic hierarchy of genres, beginning his evaluation with history painting and assigning considerable esteem to it: "So we commence with historical painting […], [here] artist has the most beautiful and extensive field to demonstrate talent and attain the most profound effect."[26] Describing Ditlev Blunck's painting, *The Widow of Zarephath and the Prophet Elijah*, as an illustration, Høyen extols the manifestation of "authentic historical talent." This recognition leads him to acknowledge the merits of Blunck's work, even when confronted with potential critiques regarding certain

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[25] Leo Swane, "Om Høyen," *Tilskueren*, no. 25 (1908), 730.

Swane highlights some inconsistencies in Høyen's approach. For instance, Høyen initially referred to the era of Winckelmann and Lessing as a time of "unsavory writing" when texts were primarily aimed at guiding artists toward taste and beauty, leading artists to read about art rather than experiencing it (Høyen deemed Lessing's *Laocoön* as a spiritually significant but ultimately irrelevant book for art). In contrast, over time, Høyen begins to advocate for guiding artists toward the path of what he considers true art (i.e., national art) and starts imposing requirements, such as specific subject matter that artists should address.

[26] Niels Laurits Høyen, *Nogle Bemærkninger over de paa Charlottenborg udstillede Konstsager* (Kjøbenhavn: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1828), 18.

nuances: “While assessing the piece from the perspective of colour and drawing, we find it somewhat monotonous, especially in the shadowed parts, then it indeed lacks a certain aesthetic allure.”[27] Yet, simultaneously, he seems to seek justification, possibly due to his fondness for the subject matter, and underscores the challenges faced by the painter, such as “the pressure that often accompanies artists during competitive assignments, which could potentially compromise their artistic freedom and attention to detail.”[28]

Høyen devoted minimal attention to portrait painting, and although he recognized the merits of a well-constructed composition, he primarily regards portraits as a domain of private commissions from the bourgeoisie, rather than as conveyors of artistic ideas. Different approach occurs in the case of genre painting, initially met with reserve but eventually integrated into Høyen’s vision of national art, alongside landscape painting. In his early review, a passage from discussing history to genre painting is accompanied by a prompt emphasis on his stance that “it would be unfortunate if genre painting were to advance at the expense of history painting.”[29] This viewpoint that does not conform to the later advocacy for national art criteria — which will resonate as strongly in landscape as in genre painting — might be infused here, as suggested by Leo Swane, with the exuberance of Høyen’s still youthful reflections on art.[30] In his early career, Høyen does not give much emphasis to genre scenes, and that perspective is perhaps best illustrated by his assessment of Ditlev Blunck’s (1798-1853) *Street Scene* (1828), which he described in detail and concluded: “the entire composition appears to be more of a study undertaken by a historical painter to acquaint himself with colours and light effects.” [fig. 20][31]

Høyen presented a distinct approach to landscapes right from the outset, displaying his profound interest from a young age (as seen, for instance, in his lectures on landscape for the Students’ Association in 1821). Therefore, it is challenging to fully agree with Leo Swane’s assessment that Høyen initially held a somewhat reserved stance toward landscape painting. Swane suggests that despite encountering Caspar David Friedrich’s (1774-1840) works in Dresden and being impressed by them, Høyen maintained a degree of distance from landscape due to the literary and symbolic elements that German Romanticism readily incorporated into

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[27] Ibidem, 20.

[28] Ibidem.

[29] Ibidem.

[30] Swane, “Om Høyen,” 740.

[31] Høyen, *Nogle Bemærkninger*, 34.

art, elements that were at variance with Høyen's artistic inclinations.[32] On the contrary, Høyen devoted considerable attention to landscapes in his review from 1828, pointing out that "in the exhibition, the landscape presents an intriguing array of works by several talented artists," among whom he particularly highlighted the contributions of Jens Peter Møller (1783–1854) and Johan Christian Dahl (1788–1857).[33] He remarks on the "effect, strength and lightness" with which Dahl approached his Norwegian landscapes. In his description of the *Sognefjord*, Høyen lauds Dahl's mastery in depicting "sunlight piercing through clouds, illuminating mountain snow, and enveloping cliff slopes in a misty haze" [fig. 21].[34] He compares Dahl's and Møller's landscapes, recognizing that although Møller may not match Dahl in terms of detail of forms and colours, he excels in conveying the overall essence of the landscape, while Dahl occasionally loses sight of the holistic portrayal due to his intense focus on fragments.

It took some time before Høyen fully advocated for the superiority of Danish painting, and Dahl eventually faded from his sphere of interest due to his Norwegian origin. Nonetheless, initially, in the works of Dahl and Friedrich, who shared a strong artistic dialogue and friendship, Høyen identified the embodiment of ideas he was just beginning to conceptualize regarding the future direction of landscape painting in Denmark.[35] In 1821, Høyen argued in his lecture that "for painting to reach the pinnacle it achieved in the XVI century, it must do so through the way of landscape," where truth and the profound feelings converge.[36] Initially, he discovered these qualities in the works of C.D. Friedrich, about whom he wrote: "[his] forte lies in the truth with which he portrays nature and his deep insight into it; those who believe he is a one-dimensional mystic confined to painting only somber nocturnal scenes or misty landscapes are gravely mistaken. [...] His fundamental principles undeniably dictate that the artist must convey the most

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[32] Swane, "Om Høyen," 741-742.

[33] Høyen, *Nogle Bemærkninger*, 48-50.

[34] Ibidem.

[35] On Johan Christian Dahl and Caspar David Friedrich see for example: *Dahl und Friedrich: romantische Landschaften*, eds. Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick, et al. (Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2014).

[36] Johan Louis Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned med Bilag af Breve* (Kjøbenhavn: Samfundet til den danske Litteraturs Fremme, 1872), 28.

profound and heartfelt emotions [...] If the artist creates something that does not align with his own feelings […], his work loses its truth, becoming an inauthentic work of art."[37]

Ultimately, Høyen's remarks from the 1820s do not portray him as a staunch advocate of national art, but rather as a critic who adheres to the academic tradition. His approach to artwork itself underscores the artist's genius and sensibility over its societal significance, a facet that would gain importance in his later formulated concepts. A noticeable change in his position, however, occurred in the 1830s when the issue of nationality began to emerge in political discourse, prompting Høyen's active involvement with national liberal circles.[38] Like many others, Høyen was stirred by patriotic sentiments, and his awareness of homeland gradually expanded. This transformation was undoubtedly also influenced by his study journeys around the country, including a visit to Jutland in 1830, which was further reinforced by his reading of Walter Scott (1771-1832). In the correspondence with his fiancée during this period, one can find indications of his burgeoning interest in ideas and concepts related to the homeland: "in [Scott's] *Memoirs*, the deep knowledge he displays of his land and his people, the characteristics that emerge in his national descriptions, have evoked a serious and persistent resonance during my travels around Jutland. I now feel, more than ever, that the gift of being able to understand, perceive, and depict human life can became both splendid and worthwhile."[39] As Hans Edvard Nørregård-Nielsen notes, Høyen began to perceive everything through a new lens, emphasizing the imperative for artists to cultivate a profound familiarity with their native land before venturing into studies abroad. His conviction laid in the premise that any artistic endeavor should commence with understanding oneself, progressing to a comprehensive exploration of one's roots and homeland.[40] The essence of studying immediate surroundings and depicting the life of common people, as a foundational to artistic pursuits, will therefore spring up as central principles within his concept of national art.

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[37] Andreas Aubert, *Maleren Johan Christian Dahl: et stykke av forrige aarhundredes kunst- og kulturhistorie* (Kristiania: Aschehoug, 1920), 126.

[38] This is also evident in the composition of the group that attended the Friday meetings at Høyen's house, which included not only artists but also national-liberal politicians such as Orla Lehmann, Carl Ploug, and Ditlev Gothard Monrad.

[39] Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned*, 57.

[40] Hans Edvard Nørregård-Nielsen, *The Golden Age of Danish Art. Drawings from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Copenhagen* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 1995), 49-50.

At the same instant, Høyen keenly observed the emergence of a new generation of artists, including Wilhelm Bendz, Ditlev Blunck, Christen Købke, Vilhelm Kyhn, Wilhelm Marstrand, Jørgen Roed and Martinus Rørbye, largely fostered by Eckersberg's influence. These artists embarked on a twofold evolution: firstly, they increasingly delved into landscape painting as a result of Eckersberg's plain-air courses; secondly, they responded to the evolving tastes of a bourgeoisie clientele, especially demand for portraits and genre scenes, thereby conforming to the artistic inclinations of their contemporary patrons. Already in the work of Eckersberg, who explored a broad spectrum of subjects, ranging from historical and maritime painting to portraiture and genre scenes, one can discern certain elements that Høyen would later underscore in his concepts, and that would be further elaborated upon by the younger generation of painters. As an example may serve the *View towards the Swedish Coast from the Ramparts of Kronborg Castle* (1829), which, while reflecting Eckersberg's characteristic attention to detail and precision in drawing, also incorporates such elements as the renaissance Kronborg castle in Helsingør along with its fortifications, or the Danish flag positioned in almost the central point of the composition [fig. 22]. Historical architecture, Danish coastline, and elements like the Danish flag would become recurring motifs in paintings that evolved during the 1830s, and which will acquire heightened significance and distinctive forms in the 1840s, largely owing to discourse forged by Høyen.

Hence, it is not without significance that Høyen begins his review of the 1838 exhibition at Charlottenborg with a recognition of Eckersberg and his pupils (introducing the term "Eckersberg's school"). In his view, Danish art was primarily distinguished by its profound engagement with the study of nature, a foundational principle rooted in Eckersberg's teaching that would consistently resonate within Danish paintings.[41]

Høyen also endeavored to reconcile the development of genre painting with the ideas expressed in his letters during a journey across Denmark. He grappled with the question of how to convey the exploration of Danish folk life as the essence of authentic Danish culture in painting, all the while preserving the significance of historical painting. Hence, he formed the assessment that history painting, when employed to depict everyday life scenes on a smaller scale, has recently assumed the appellation of genre painting.[42] The artist's proficiency in this

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[41] Ibidem.

[42] Kasper Lægring, "The (Re)birth of Genre Painting during the Danish Golden Age The Case of the Studio Portrait," *MDCCC 1800*, 11 (2022), 55.

realm depends on the ability to choose motifs from their immediate surroundings that are easily comprehensible to the viewer and encourage their engagement, resulting in a more pronounced impact. He also formulates ideas that will resound in his subsequent lectures, notably emphasizing that everyday life, even if it cannot be deemed picturesque, provides the artist with abundant opportunities to showcase genuine expression.[43]

Ultimately, what Høyen initially conceived as a pathway to historical painting evolved into an independent artistic pursuit. Exhibitions at Charlottenborg during the 1830s and 1840s reveal the rising prominence of genre and landscape painting, a trend that would intensify in the ensuing decades. As Kasper Monrad aptly summarizes, even though historical painting remained the officially esteemed genre with artists still receiving official commissions, a noticeable shift occurred when painters or their private clients began to choose subjects. This shift led to historical painting losing its popularity and being overtaken by portraits, landscapes, and particularly genre scenes.[44]

Lastly, Høyen's writings and lectures also illuminate his overarching perspective on the role and significance of art in general terms. Already in the review from 1828, he noted: "We often treat works of art too fleetingly, more as a source of pleasant amusement rather than the culmination of diverse perspectives on nature and life [...]. Artworks, while affording us refined pleasure, should also serve to open our eyes to more profound and contemplative reflections on a world from which they are likely to only manage to capture a few fleeting glimpses."[45] For Høyen, the beauty of a work of art possesses not only a sensual aspect but also a moral dimension. In his ongoing contemplations on beauty, he frequently revisits the notion that a work of art should serve as an expression of spiritual and moral strength. In his lecture from 1851, he states that: "the beauty of an authentic work of art emanates directly from the Divine, manifesting through every aspect of creation. [...] External sensual beauty, reaching the highest of what humanity can conceive in its current state, becomes a vessel through which spiritual and

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[43] Kasper Monrad, *Dansk Guldalder. Lyset, landskabet og hverdagslivet* (København: Gyldendal, 2013), 157.

[44] Kasper Monrad, "History and Danish Golden Age Painting," *Meddelelser fra Thorvaldsens Museum* (1997), 29-30.

Historical painting lost its dominant position in Danish art, as evidenced by the exhibitions at Charlottenborg. For instance, in 1811, historical paintings constituted 43% of all works displayed, but by 1831, this figure had dropped to just 14%, and in 1846, historical paintings accounted for no more than 7% of the total, despite a significant increase in the number of exhibited works, which grew from 30 in 1811 to 241 in 1846.

[45] Høyen, *Nogle Bemærkninger*, 3.

moral power find their voice."[46] He illustrates his concept through a comparison of Bertel Thorvaldsen's sculpture, *Pius VII*, and the bust of Goethe by Christian Daniel Rauch (1777-1857), emphasizing that one can readily discern the distinction between seeking beauty purely in the physical forms, which might evoke the impression of a caricatured portrait (which Høyen saw in Rauch's work), and seeking it in the holistic expression of spiritual determination and moral potency, culminating in a spiritual portrayal of a vigorous individual (as exemplified by Thorvaldsen) [fig. 23, fig. 24].[47]

Overall, Høyen ascribes a fundamental purpose to art, echoing the discussions on the role of art that he encountered in Germany, particularly emphasizing the notion that aesthetic enjoyment should lead to acquiring knowledge and deepening moral sensitivity. This sentiment is echoed in his essay from 1836, where he contends that artists should employ their creations in service of a higher collective purpose, fulfilling the yearnings of others; and that art should serve as an instrument through which contemporary sentiments towards history and nature could find meaningful expression.[48] However, for these objectives to be realized, art must be easily accessible to a wide audience, and according to Høyen, museums are central in this role. He believed that the main hindrance to art reaching its full potential stemmed from the limited opportunities for individuals to nurture their artistic sensibility through direct encounters with artworks. Thus, instead of isolating them within royal and private collections or infrequently displaying in exhibitions, it is imperative to establish public art collections, organize annual exhibitions, and form associations to provide the general public with exposure to visual arts.[49]

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[46] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Om konstens vaesen og opgave, særlig med hensyn til Danmark. Forelæsninger i vinteren 1851," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter: udgivne paa Foranstaltning af Selskabet for nordisk Konst*, ed. Johan Louis Ussing (København: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1876), 3:26.

[47] Ibidem.

[48] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Hvad bør man vente af Konstforeningen? Af Dansk Konstblad," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter: udgivne paa Foranstaltning af Selskabet for nordisk Konst*, ed. Johan Louis Ussing (København: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1871), 1:260-273.

[49] Agerbæk, *Høyen mellem klassicisme og romantik*, 348.

In 1851, Høyen further expanded on his ideas in a series of lectures on the essence and role of art. In one of these lectures, titled *On the Justification of the Demand that Art Should Connect with the People* [*Om Berettigelsen af den Fordring, at Kunsten skal slutte sig til Folket*], he discussed the social role of art. He emphasized that the choice of subject matter is as crucial as the audience's response to a work of art, and only a theme rooted in the artist's national identity could engage both the artist and the audience effectively. Høyen contended that those who "embellished their art with a borrowed pen" could not create something of genuine value and relevance to the people.

Høyen's diagnosis is particularly evident in his thoughts on the Thorvaldsen Museum from 1837, where he notes, that "the beneficial influence of art is conspicuously absent from our overall upbringing [...]. A majority of our public monuments, collections, and exhibitions are not yet suitably accessible or arranged for educational purposes," and he concludes that "a comprehensive effort is needed to provide changes and improvements in all these domains."[50] He articulated this perspective while actively engaged with the reorganization of collections at Frederiksborg and the Thorvaldsen Museum. Nonetheless, it would take two more years before he embarked on the comprehensive realization of his vision for a publicly accessible art museum.

4.2. N.L. Høyen's Concept of the National Art

On March 23rd, 1844, Høyen delivered a lecture at the Scandinavian Society entailed *On the Conditions for the Development of a Scandinavian National Art* [*Om Betingelserne for en Skandinavisk Nationalkonsts' Udvikling*] which undoubtedly was of profound significance for the formation of Danish 19th-century art. Høyen dedicated his discourse to elaborating upon the fundamental characteristics of art and principles which served as the cornerstone for his conceptualization of the ideals which a national art should embody. The enduring nature of his convictions becomes apparent when taken into account that in a subsequent lecture titled *About National Art* [*Om National Konst*], delivered on February 25th, 1863, he continued to espouse the same principles. The only notable difference was that in this instance, he directed the focus not to Scandinavia at large but specifically towards Denmark.[51]

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[50] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Om Thorvaldsen og hans Museum," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter*, 1:306.

One of these initiatives was the establishment of the Thorvaldsen Museum, an endeavor that Høyen believed would usher in an era of heightened art appreciation. He foresaw that the museum would elevate the name of the renowned artist, foster national sentiments, and attract the admiration of foreigners, ultimately amplifying the impact of Thorvaldsen's masterpieces.

[51] This shift in perspective should be interpreted within the broader context of evolving views on Scandinavianism in relation to changing political circumstances. In 1844 Høyen discussed Scandinavian art emphasizing that in a region with such deep historical and cultural connections among its peoples, artists could have a profound impact when they regarded the entire Nordic region as their homeland and its history as their own. However, by 1863, given the lack of support from Scandinavian neighbors during the Danish-Prussian conflict, his focus had narrowed to the Danish perspective. Thus, he emphasized that the most effective way to establish closer ties with Sweden and Norway was for Danes to assert their own identity and nationality through their art. He stressed the importance of validating Danish culture, history, and legends, demonstrating that they didn't require foreign influences to enhance their identity.

The lecture from 1844 is generally regarded as the most influential in the Danish history of art, yet it should be viewed not so much as the inception but rather as the synthesis of ideas, which were continually evolving and also previously articulated in less structured forms (through exhibition reviews, Academy lectures, contributions to associations, and interactions with artists). As Kasper Monrad has noted, even prior to the lecture in 1844, Høyen engaged in discussions about Danish art which occurred during Friday meetings at his home, in the Art Society and at the Academy.[52] This is further supported by Johan Thomas Lundbye's letter to the fellow painter Lorenz Frølich from 1842, where he shares Høyen's perspective on Nordic art and recalls statements from his lecture: "art should emanate from a faithful and loving perception of folk life, of life in the old Nordic region."[53] Thus, the attempt to reconstruct Høyen's theses is important given their direct influence on artists, the establishment of criteria for evaluating their works, and consequently also purchases for the Royal Picture Gallery. Drawing from Høyen's lectures, his theses can be summarized into several key categories.

The first one is centered around external influences. In his pursuit of advancing a distinctly national art, Høyen staunchly opposed any foreign impact, encompassing both historical precedents and contemporary art. Even when delineating the trajectory of Danish art history, he diminishes the significance of foreign influences, asserting: "[At] the onset of the Reformation […] estates and palaces grew grander, yet art still remained without citizenship. We had our architects from Germany and the Netherlands, as well as sculptors and painters. […] In the era of Christian V and Frederick IV, Danish artists emerged alongside the prevailing French ones; and French influences supplanted Dutch. However, they merely echoed a faint semblance of foreign splendor. Even when the royal academy of arts was founded in 1754, Danish artists were so scarce that foreigners had to assume the most important teaching posts."[54] In his opposition, Høyen — echoing Grundtvig's ideas and Oehlenschläger's poetry — ardently advocates for a rekindling of the motherland: "I am convinced that here heart beats as warmly, and eyes perceive as healthy as among our southern and western neighbors; we only need to rouse ourselves from the slumber!"[55] For such transformation to take place, artists must explore

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[52] Monrad, *Dansk Guldalder*, 342-446.

[53] Ibidem.

[54] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Om Betingelserne for en skandinavisk Nationalkonsts Udvikling," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter*, 1:351-368.

[55] Ibidem.

the history of their native region, as well as examine the distinctive characteristics inherent to their homeland and nation, because only from this wellspring art can experience a renaissance. Distancing from foreign influences will therefore manifest in two ways: firstly, as a persuasive argument for artists to seek inspiration exclusively from their native landscapes and history; and secondly, as a criterion that favours paintings created by artists of Danish origin.[56]

Another aspect lies in the imperative to delve into the Nordic, primarily Danish, cultural heritage, as it forms the bedrock of national identity. In this terms, turning to mythology is paramount, as Høyen asserts: "We have the material in our own legends [...] is it not easy even for you, my listeners, to envision scenes featuring early medieval figures that you would like to see painted or sculptured?"[57] When searching for characteristic Norse traits, one should also look among common people, "where the original Norse characteristics remain less diluted," as "today's sons can trace their features back to those of ancient gods and heroes."[58] Thus, in addition to exploring mythology, an exceptionally significant aspect involves studies of the immediate surroundings, including folk regions, where national origins are manifested: "the simplicity that can still be observed in fishing cottages and rural communities in remote valleys [...], the deep fjords, where isolated life has preserved more of its original character, [all] continues to shine brightly today."[59]

As a result, artists, primarily based in Copenhagen, will embark on journeys across Denmark in pursuit of rugged landscapes that mirror the essence of the country and will closely observe the life of people, where the national spirit is supposed to be most vividly expressed. Høyen provides descriptions of where and what to seek: "Throughout the Danish islands and plains, between the mountains of Norway to Sweden, artists must become intimately familiar with the lives of the people. We hope that their minds and eyes will be deeply imbued with the profound essence of nature, even in its most austere manifestations, such as the moors or amidst barren rocks. […] The nation must first be seen in all its uniqueness, [with all] what is wonderful in the surrounding nature […]. Until this happens, the legends and exploits of Scandinavia will

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[56] Ibidem.

[57] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Om national Konst," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter*, 3:177.

Contributing to the growing interest and re-evaluation of Norse mythology and history was Grundtvig's *Northern Mythology* [*Nordens Mythologi*], published in 1808, as well as *The Fall of the Heroic Life in the North* [*Optrin af Kæmpelivets Undergang i Nord*] from 1908, a volume of which was owned by Høyen.

[58] Ibidem.

[59] Høyen, *Om Betingelserne*, 351-368.

wait in vain to reveal themselves in form and colour."[60] He concludes that only when a painter opens his eyes to the picturesqueness of his surroundings, can he truly become a national artist.[61] This will primarily result in the flourishing of landscape and genre painting in the 19th century Danish art scene, and his description of Danish islands and moors will be transformed into compelling subjects.

In the overall tone of his lectures, Høyen emphasizes that the purpose of art extends beyond the realm of mere aesthetic pleasure. The essence of art resides in its profound capacity as a medium for cognition and as a bridge to nurture a sense of community. The exploration of nature and the lives of common people as foundational sources for artistic creation illuminates the enduring significance of art in the pursuit of unity and the elevation of collective consciousness and national identity. Through art, as highlighted by Høyen, artists fulfill their vocation, and it should be their priority not only to cultivate their talent but also "to advocate for their homeland, Nordic nature, the lives of the people, and the rich historical heritage."[62] Noone before articulated expectations for art in Denmark, directly addressing artists, as comprehensively as Høyen did. The artists' response did not come late, especially that the groundwork had already been laid through the previously explained factors, particularly the principles espoused by Eckersberg in the domains of genre and landscape themes.

4.2.1. Response from the Artists

Høyen's influence on artists is most effectively captured in their monographs, memoirs, diaries, and letters. However, at this juncture, it might be valuable to adopt a broader perspective, thus prompting the endeavor to delineate four distinct attitudes that emerged in response to Høyen's concept. These attitudes can be elucidated as follows: firstly, there are artists who, having studied abroad, reconcile external influences with the call for national art; secondly, those who took Høyen's call quite literally and embark on journeys across Denmark in search of the motifs he identified as fundamental for the Danish art; thirdly, artists whose oeuvre extends beyond Høyen's vision but who created some works in accordance with his expectations, often

[60] Ibidem.

[61] Høyen, "Om national Konst," 80.

[62] Høyen, *Om Betingelserne*, 351-368.

for exhibition or competition purposes; and finally, artists who diametrically oppose his artistic policy.

One of the first painters who displayed a keen interest in motifs from Danish folk life was Jørgen Sonne (1801–1890), a member of the group of artists profoundly influenced by Høyen. Sonne epitomizes the endeavor to pivot from foreign influences, which he absorbed during his academic pursuits in Germany and Italy, towards a resolute focus on national themes. Initially, he drew artistic inspiration from Italian depictions of folk life, and it was not until 1844 that he shifted the creative focus exclusively towards Danish subject matter. This transformation was accompanied by a notable alteration in his artistic style. The profusion of figures and the exuberant ambiance characteristic of Italian paintings gradually yielded to more muted tones and restrained emotional expressions in his oeuvre.[63] Nonetheless, the case of paintings from the early 1840s underscores that the endeavor to visually convey Høyen's concepts and to seek a distinctively Danish expression was by no means straightforward. Sonne made an early attempt to implement Høyen's concepts in the *Harvest Scene in Zealand*, acquired by the Art Society in 1842 [fig. 24]. However, it is noteworthy that this painting bears a striking resemblance to his prior work, *Wine Harvest in Naples*, executed by Sonne just a year earlier [fig. 26]. In terms of composition, light and colour, and even the type of folk motif, the transformation is essentially just change of costume from Italian to Danish. Similarly, in the case of painting titled *An Old Fisherman Putting Out His Net at Sundown*, which was exhibited in 1844 at Charlottenborg, a few days after Høyen's lecture, Sonne did not entirely emancipate himself from Italian influences [fig. 27]. As noted by Kasper Monrad, although the yellowish evening sky differed from the morning sky in his Roman campaign scenes, the figures in the painting still bore a noticeable resemblance to his Italian peasant depictions.[64] The overall ambiance and contrasts in colour might also evoke recollections of landscapes by German Romantics, such as Friedrich's *Woman in front of the setting sun* (1818). Høyen commented on this work, stating that "in the lines is Sonne's most excellent work, […] but also one of the strangest that any Danish painter has ever produced."[65] Despite the ambiguous assessment, the work was acquired for the royal collection of paintings in 1844, possibly owing to its pioneering attempt to capture a unique ambiance of a Nordic summer night.

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[63] Peter Michael Hornung, *Ny dansk kunsthistorie* (København: Kunstbogklubben, 1993), 4:21.

[64] Monrad, *Dansk Guldalder*, 342-446.

[65] Ibidem.

Due to the central role of landscape in Høyen's vision for the Danish national art, many landscape painters held a strong commitment to his ideas. One such artist greatly influenced by Høyen was the landscape painter Frederik Christian Kiærskou (1805–1891). As a student of Frederik Christian Lund, Kiærskou was exposed to the German-Romantic landscape tradition and the Dutch painting of the 17th century. However, he consistently acknowledged Høyen's profound impact on the development of his art, often expressing this sentiment directly in letters to Høyen: "Mr Professor, it is no empty utterance when I say to you how deeply I feel that you and none other was the man, who, by your strict but just critique of my work, enabled the elevated independent turn my spirit has attained, and the propitious consonance of my brush with that same."[66] Kiærskou's body of work reflects a struggle between the influence of foreign artists, as evident in works like the *Rocky Landscape. Djupadal in Bleking* from 1855, which bears strong imprint of Ruisdael, and the quest for distinctly Danish characteristics that Høyen associated with the native landscapes and rural life of Denmark. Hence, his oeuvre also includes depictions of fishing villages and the daily lives of fishermen along the Danish coastline, and works such as *View of the fishing village Sletten. Brisk Gale* from 1882, could serve as an illustration of Høyen's teachings, demonstrating the enduring influence of his ideals on Kiærskou's artistic expression [fig. 28].

As one of the artists who directly translated several of Høyen's ideas and indications into visual form, stands Peter Christian Skovgaard (1817–1875). He epitomizes the group of artists who, inspired by Høyen's counsel, took the radical step of forgoing foreign studies in favor of embarking on an extensive journey across Denmark. Skovgaard's sketchbooks from the 1840s, preserved in the Statens Museum for Kunst, serve as invaluable archives that vividly illustrate the profound extent to which he embraced Høyen's call. His sketches capture scenes of labor, the Danish rural landscape and explorations of traditional folk attire [fig. 29, fig. 30]. Høyen's imprint on Skovgaard was so profound that he diligently pursued the very motifs that Høyen had advocated, as exemplified in the depictions of Danish cliffs. In the early 1840s, Skovgaard initially depicted them in his works, and Høyen continued to encourage him to revisit these locations. In a letter to Skovgaard, he wrote: "There is a wealth of material for a painter! […] In

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[66] Cit. per: Susanne Bangert, "Gathering Storm. A Landscape Painting from a Danish Province and its Art Histories," *Romantik. Journal for the Study of Romanticism* 7, no. 1 (2018), 52.
Høyen, when evaluating Kiærskou's landscapes at the Charlottenborg exhibition in 1838, reached the conclusion that the depiction of natural elements, particularly vegetation, appeared somewhat stereotypical. Consequently, he advised the artist to further study nature in order to refine his portrayal of trees.

several places, the cliff, so to speak, tells its own story."[67] The cliffs would evolve into a recurring theme to which Skovgaard would frequently return. Notably, works such as *Højerup Church on the Cliffs of Stevns* from 1842 earned considerable acclaim for the adept fusion of a cliff panorama with the integration of a 13th-century church [fig. 31]. Skovgaard's landscape, as highlighted by Sally Schlosser Schmidt, "often incorporate historical elements, not in the manner of traditional history paintings with kings or mythological figures, but through the inclusion of medieval churches and the unspoiled landscapes of Denmark, replete with its majestic beech forests and ancient oaks."[68] In this sense, his landscapes of distinct Danish regions serve as palpable manifestations of a more nationalist affection for one's homeland, intricately linked to its particular geography and history.

A parallel situation emerged with another prominent artist of the Golden Age, Johan Thomas Lundbye (1818–1848), whose deep sense of patriotism impelled him to enlist in the army when the First Schleswig War erupted in 1848. Inspired by Høyen, he too embarked on a journey through the Danish countryside. Much like Skovgaard, he sketched during the expedition and meticulously recorded his impressions in a diary, which he later drew upon for inspiration in his paintings. One entry reads: "Kongens Møller has such a captivating character that I have not encountered anything more enchanting in all of Zealand. There are five mills closely clustered, surrounded by lush meadows and ponds adorned with water lilies, with dense forests encircling the scene."[69] Lundbye dedicated himself to the study of Danish nature, and in his correspondence with fellow painters, like Lorenz Frølich (1820–1908), he repeated Høyen's ideas: "Let us stand together, with Skovgaard and me, united in our pursuit of a singular objective: to faithfully depict the essence of Denmark's nature, its people, animals, both on land and at sea."[70] An example of that could be Lundbye's work from 1847, *A Croft at Lodskov near Vognserup Manor*, wherein he skillfully amalgamated the quintessential elements of a Danish countryside summer day. This encompassed corn fields, a sandy road, a thatched farmstead, a

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[67] Gry Hedin, "Seeing the history of the earth in the cliff as Møn. The Interaction between Landscape Painting and Geology in Denmark in the First Half of the 19th Century," *Romantik. Journal for the Study of Romanticism*, 2 (2013), 89.

[68] Schlosser Schmidt, "National kunst," [access online, see note 9 in this chapter].

[69] Marianne Saabye, "Kunstnerne ved Skarritsø. En strid om det nationale maleri," in *Guldalderens Verden. 20 historier fra nær og fjern*, ed. Bente Scavenius (København: Gyldendal, 1996), 144.

[70] Ibidem, 146.

contentedly grazing cow, and the untamed roadside vegetation [fig. 32]. Afterwards, Lundbye acknowledged Høyen as the "spiritual father" of this work.[71]

There is no doubt that Høyen wielded a decisive influence on Lundbye's works, as expressed by the artist himself: "In him [Høyen] I found spirit, knowledge, and a discerning eye."[72] However, Lundbye also came to perceive Høyen's unwavering nature, particularly during the creation of his significant painting, *A Danish Coast. View from Kitnæs on Roskilde Fjord*, from 1843 [fig. 33]. In this painting, Lundbye presents the coastal landscape as a quintessential motif of the Danish terrain, albeit in an exceptionally monumental form. Although Lundbye created numerous sketches from Roskilde, in this particular instance, he combines various motifs and processes them to achieve this monumental effect. In response to Høyen's insistence on improvement, Lundbye diligently focused on refining details such as plants at the foreground or clouds formations. Upon completion of the painting, Lundbye changes his perception of Høyen's demands, coming to appreciate his capacity to effectively steer the artist throughout the working process, and provide him with constructive objections without diminishing the artist's creative drive."[73]

Høyen's influence on the Danish art scene was also closely intertwined with his roles within the Art Society, the Nordic Art Society, and museums. This intersection manifested in the practical dimension of his impact, substantiated by significant authority in selection and acquisition of artworks for the collections of the aforementioned associations and the Royal Picture Gallery.[74] In 1836, for instance, he formulated the theme for the competitions organized by the Art Society, which revolved around the depiction of either the exterior or interior of the cathedral in Ribe, acknowledged by Høyen as one of Denmark's most significant building from the Middle Ages. The competition was won by Jørgen Roed (1808–1888), who submitted his painting titled *The Interior of Ribe Cathedral* [fig. 34]. Guided by Høyen's ideas, Roed adhered to the notion that medieval churches should be restored to their original form and "cleansed" of all subsequent additions (even if this "original form" primarily reflected 19th-century

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[71] Monrad, *Dansk Guldalder*, 27.

[72] Kasper Monrad, *Hverdagsbilleder. Dansk Guldalder – kunstnerne og deres vilkår* (København: Christian Ejlers, 1989), 102.

[73] Ibidem.

[74] In 1847, Høyen established the Nordic Art Society with the intention of fostering and promoting Nordic art. The Society's objective also encompassed the acquisition of paintings for its collection, that featured motifs embodying the fusion of the national and the Nordic, both in genre and landscape painting.

perceptions of the Middle Ages), thus Roed omitted the organs installed in the presbytery at that time and exposed a whitewashed wall adorned with pillars, arches, and half-columns.[75] Another painting by Roed from 1836, titled *Street in Roskilde. In the Background, the Cathedral*, exhibits a similar approach to constructing a specific image in accordance with Høyen's advice or, more precisely, his expectations [fig. 35]. As noted by Kasper Monrad, the choice of the theme and the visual perspective in Roed's composition corresponds to a publication about the cathedral issued by the Art Society in 1833, which featured an introduction by Høyen and included illustrations, one of which depicted the cathedral from the same vantage point as in Roed's work.[76] However, the illustration also reveals a view of the chapel added to the main structure of the cathedral between 1774 and 1825, a detail that Roed concealed behind snow-covered trees, likely at Høyen's behest, as he was known for opposing the construction of new additions to historical buildings.[77]

By this point, it may have become evident that Høyen's position inevitably drew criticism. Artists who disagreed with his appointment — which equated to relinquishing certain privileges — found themselves in opposition to his influence. These tensions grew so pronounced that in the 1840s, a debate ensued, primarily triggered by the preferential treatment shown to artists who adhered to Høyen's principles, resulting in their works being acquired for the collection of the Nordic Art Society, among other accolades.[78] During the intense public discourse of that time, a faction of artists specializing in landscapes and depictions of national heritage, who followed Høyen, became known as "the Blondes" (i.a. Johan Thomas Lundbye, Peter Christian Skovgaard, Jørgen Sonne, Frederik Vermehren, Christen Dalsgaard, Constantin Hansen), while the second group, characterized as cosmopolitan due to the international leanings

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[75] Jesper Svenningsen, "As much architect as painter," in *100 Years of Danish Art. 100 paintings from the 19th century*, ed. Marianne Saabye (Copenhagen: Den Hirschsprungske Samling, 2011), 58.

[76] Monrad, "History and Danish Golden Age Painting," 36.

[77] Ibidem.

[78] Karina Lykke Grand, "Dansk guldalder. Perioden og begrebets historie," in *Dansk guldalder: verdenskunst mellem to katastrofer*, ed. Cecilie Høgsbro Østergaard (Kobenhavn: Statens Museum for Kunst, 2019), 49.

of several of its artists, was dubbed "the Brunettes." (i.a. Niels Simonsen, Frederik Rohde, Christian Schleisner, Johan Gertner, Anton Melbye, Ditlev Blunck).[79]

The debate played out in the press, pitting the critical perspective found in the *Flyveposten* against the "Høyenian" viewpoint championed by *Fædrelandet*. *Flyveposten* regarded Høyen's perspectives as controversial, accusing him of fostering artistic narrowness by emphasizing solely Danish and Nordic motifs and providing one-sided selection policy, designed to confine artists to a specific approach.[80] For instance, in *Flyveposten*, Sonne, whose works received Høyen's appreciation, was compared to Simonsen, who intended to convey a similarly national narrative, but whom Høyen had omitted from his endorsement due to clear foreign influences. It was remarked that: "Simonsen's battle scene is profoundly Danish, authentically national, and stirring for the patriotic spirit, [that he] resembles an impassioned bard who, in a highly poetic flight, unveils historical depth through the translucent veil of poetry […] In contrast, Sonne's painting reads more like a straightforward news report."[81] In such cases, Høyen usually initiated discussions and provided responses in the form of critical remarks, especially toward artists whose work he did not genuinely appreciate, like the portrait painter Johan Vilhelm Gertner. Hence, in an article in *Fædrelandet* from 1845, Høyen criticizes Gertner while praising Roed. He commends Roed's artistry for its refinement and skillful brushwork, the harmony in its execution, its simplicity, the gentle yet expressive colour tones, and above all, the distinctive form and expression it conveys.[82] On the other hand, he notes that Gertner "falls short in capturing the essence and emotions," pointing out a multitude of errors in his paintings, including "poorly and tastelessly rendered details."[83]

To summarize, Høyen's concept of national art, which began to take shape in the 1830s, partly due to external factors and partly as a result of his own readings and studies, crystallized into a distinct program in the 1840s. Consequently, Høyen, who held key positions and exerted

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[79] The names indicate the colour palettes preferred by the two groups: those who embraced a national perspective frequently employed a bright and distinct palette, portraying their subjects in daylight. In contrast, the "cosmopolitans" often utilized a broader range of brown hues, influenced in part by French traditions and the education received by some of them at art academies in Düsseldorf and Munich. These names were used by *Dagbladet* in 1854 to emphasize the two sides of the conflict.

[80] Mortensen, "Omrking N.L. Høyen," 364-376.

[81] Ibidem.

[82] Ibidem.

[83] Ibidem.

direct influence on artists and the formation of collections, formulated a narrative that would become dominant on the Danish art scene. As Karina Lykke Grand points out, this 19th-century narrative had a dual focus: it aimed to define what was uniquely Danish while also emphasizing that this "Danishness" should embody national-liberal potential.[84] Such perspective aligned with key political ideas, expressed by Orla Lehmann, which could be illustrated by the words from one of his speeches: "there are no provinces in Denmark, there is only one Denmark, inhabited by Danes. Danes from the same family, with the same history are one indivisible nation with a common character and customs, a common language, with common memory and hopes."[85] Art assumed a significant position in discussions surrounding the redefinition of national identity. While many artists created depictions of Denmark to address contemporary discourse, landscapes and genre scenes from the 1840s and 1860s have played a pivotal role in shaping our contemporary understanding of the distinct Danish landscape and have influenced the construction of the canon of Danish art.[86]

4.3. Vision and Practice. N.L. Høyen's Remarks on Museums and Collections

"Even walls adorned with symmetrically arranged paintings […] fail to achieve an aesthetically pleasing appearance; […] the dark, oil colours within light frames look melancholic; it gives an unfavorable impression […]; in one room, the walls are draped in red velvet, while in another, they bear the texture of white, gray, and bluish plaster; tasteless monstrosities!"[87] Høyen's critical observations regarding the arrangement of paintings at Frederiksborg Castle demonstrate that in his approach to the study of art, he also paid close attention to the methods employed in the organization and presentation of art collections. Already during the early journeys, he was prompted to consider not only the artworks housed in museums and galleries but also the significance of their display. In a letter from Italy, he shared his impressions after visiting the museum in Naples: "I got acquainted with several members of

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[84] Karina Lykke Grand, "Visionen for Danmark: en politisk landskabskunst," in *Guld. Skatte fra den danske guldalder*, eds. Karina Lykke Grand, et al. (Aarhus: Aros Kunstmuseum, 2013), 97-99.

[85] Ibidem.

[86] Ibidem, 119.

[87] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Frederiksborg Slot," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter*, 1:169.

the commission that organizes the gallery. It seemed that they were dedicated to their project, yet they had not even begun to think about the arrangement of the Neapolitan gallery. [...] My conviction is growing that unless paintings and sculptures are collected and organized more effectively, […] it will continue to be exceptionally difficult to undertake comprehensive and reliable studies of individual masters."[88]

Although no single lecture serves as a repository for Høyen's insights into the pragmatic dimensions of the museum, his principles for the organization of collections and arrangement of artworks become evident through his endeavors as a museologist. Høyen's written contributions on various collections, predating the appointment as an inspector of the Royal Picture Gallery, further illuminate his perspectives, giving more nuanced understanding of his role within the Gallery, which ultimately became the focal point of his museological engagement.[89]

Regarding Danish collections, Høyen's initial commitment can be traced back to the aforementioned Frederiksborg Castle — a historical residence of the Danish royal family located in Hillerød, constructed in 1560 during the reign of Frederick II and expanded between 1600 and 1620 under the rule of Christian IV.[90] Høyen's first visit to the castle dates back to 1828, and as highlighted by Ussing, he was disappointed with the overall impact of the portrait collection housed there. It stemmed primarily from the arrangement of the artworks, which juxtaposed copies with original works, alongside the prevalence of numerous mediocre-quality pieces that tended to eclipse the genuinely good paintings; additionally, Høyen noted errors in the identification of the portrayed figures.[91] As reported by Ussing, "the young man's heart burned when he saw such carelessness and ignorance," in consequence he sought an audience with Lord Chamberlain Adam Wilhelm Hauch (1755–1838), who held responsibility for the overall management of the royal collections.[92] In the meeting with Hauch, Høyen articulated his concerns regarding the observed mistakes at Frederiksborg and introduced a set of proposals for

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[88] Drigsdahl, *N.L. Høyen i Italien*, 101.

[89] In the travel notebooks archived at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, one can find Høyen's drawings of floor plans of museums and galleries. For instance, during his visit to the Louvre in 1836, he sketched a floor plan to better understand the arrangement of artworks within the space. This practice of contemplating exhibition space evolved in tandem with his exploration of artworks and artists, highlighting the intrinsic connection between spatial organization and the acquisition of knowledge on various artistic schools.

[90] In 1878 Frederiksborg became a house for the Museum of National History [*Det Nationalhistoriske Museum*].

[91] Høyen, "Frederiksborg Slot," 152-153.

[92] Ibidem.

enhancements. His recommendations encompassed substantial changes, such as the exclusive retention of original works and the categorization of portraits into two distinct sections: the first consisting only of royal and princely portraits, and the second comprising portraits of other individuals of notable significance for Danish history.[93]

Nonetheless, it was not until 1837 that Høyen initiated the reorganization of the royal portrait collection, a process that continued until 1839 and culminated in a substantial reduction of works, from the original count of 1000 to 456.[94] Høyen's efforts led to the segregation of royal and princely portraits into one room and the portraits of distinguished Danish men into another. In his selection of works, he did not prioritize achieving comprehensiveness, which became unattainable following the exclusion of copies, but rather emphasized the clarity and chronological continuity. He summarized the outcome of these endeavors in his lecture, *The Paintings at Frederiksborg* [*Malerierne paa Frederiksborg*], where he explained that the paintings had undergone restoration, worthless copies and heavily distorted originals were removed, and the collection was arranged chronologically within the rooms on the second floor, each adorned with a simple, single-color covering.[95]

During the reorganization of the portrait collection, Høyen found himself in conflict with the Danish painter Christian Albrecht Jensen (1792–1870), an artist who had received education at both the Copenhagen and Dresden Academies. Høyen had previously critiqued Jensen's works in an early review, noting impurities in his colours and a lack of defined sources in the treatment of light.[96] However, the main point of contention arose from Jensen's role as a copyist at Frederiksborg — a practice that Høyen staunchly opposed, particularly when it came to mass-production of copies.[97] Høyen's perspective, which also resonates with Rumohr's criteria for artworks, exemplifies the shifting significance of copies and replicas during the 19th century. As Michał Mencfel points out, "in the nineteenth century, the copy was still an important element of artistic culture. In keeping with at least two hundred years of tradition, it was one of the pillars of academic education, an important component in collections with representative and prestigious

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[93] Ibidem.

[94] Ibidem, 277.

[95] Niels Laurits Høyen, "Malerierne paa Frederiksborg," in *Niels Laurits Høyens Skrifter*, 1:238-240.

[96] Anna Schram Vejlby, "Painted with love," in *100 Years of Danish Art*, ed. Marianne Saabye, 58.

[97] Henrik Bramsen and Vagn Poulsen, *Dansk Guldalderkunst. Maleri og skulptur:1750-1850. Særudgave af Dansk Kunsthistorie* (København: Politikens Forlag, 1979), 320.

aspirations, and an acceptable alternative to an unattainable original in collections."[98] However, since the mid-18th century, the notion of originality keeps raising to prominence as a pivotal criterion for assessing significance and value, also in the realm of art, reflecting the influence of Kant, who described originality as an essential feature of genius, while faithful reproduction was discredited as mere imitation.[99] In this context, Mencfel also underscores that starting from the mid-19th century, in addition to originality, another crucial quality expected of good art became its authenticity (this is exemplified through a "Holbein dispute" from 1871, which aimed to establish the authenticity of one of the two versions of Holbein's *Mayer Madonna*).[100] In the museum context, the notion of authenticity of artworks became closely intertwined with the issue of originality. While museums in the early 19th century still frequently included plaster casts and reproductions of renowned artworks, subsequent decades witnessed a shift towards the inclusion of only historical objects. In this evolving context, the importance of originality of artistic production emerged as a pivotal means to ultimately attain the desired authenticity.

In pursuit of authenticity, the assessment of an art historian was crucial, which is why Høyen dedicated considerable effort to the analysis and comparison of artworks during his travels and studying collections both abroad and in Denmark. The training of his eye and the development of evaluative skills, ultimately influenced his subsequent attributions of artworks. This, in turn, proved to be instrumental in his work at the Royal Picture Gallery, as well as in cataloguing the Moltke collection.[101]

According to Høyen, since 1804, when the Moltke collection was "established in its present location, and open to the public one day a week, it was the only place in the capital where one could freely appreciate the works of renowned old masters […]. Remarkably, this collection also assumed significant importance as an addition to the Gallery in

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98 Michał Mencfel, *Athanasius Raczyński (1788–1874). Aristocrat, Diplomat, and Patron of the Arts* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022), 415-417.

99 Ibidem.

100 Ibidem.

101 The collection was originally assembled by Count Adam Gottlob Moltke (1710–1792) and subsequently inherited by his son, Prime Minister Joachim Godske Moltke (1746–1818).
On the history of private collections in Denmark, including Moltke collection, see: Jesper Svenningsen, *Samlingssteder: Udenlandsk billedkunst i danske samlermiljøer 1690-1840* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2023).

Christiansborg."[102] Høyen notes that the Royal Picture Gallery lacks a broader selection of works by several important artists, including David Teniers the Younger, Meindert Hobbema, Adriaen van Ostade, and Jacob van Ruisdael, all of whom are notably well-represented in Moltke's gallery. He dedicated greater attention to these artists in his studies of the collection, leading to the inclusion of more extensive notes about their works in the catalogue, which encompasses a total of 156 paintings predominantly by Dutch and Flemish masters. In 1900, when the art historian Karl Madsen wrote a commentary on the reissue of the Moltke catalogue, he not only appreciated Høyen's research endeavors, lauding it as "a work of great merit for its time," but also underscored the enduring significance of his "vivid descriptions of paintings."[103] Both the descriptions and attributions of works, although not all of them have stood the test of time, originated from Høyen's comprehensive studies of Dutch and Flemish painting from the 17th century. This also underscores his adeptness in identifying the most distinctive characteristics of art collections and, consequently, the research materials he encountered in Copenhagen. Given that the Dutch painting formed a primary basis for the royal picture collection, the Moltke collection, and exerted a profound influence on Danish artists through the tradition of Dutch painters working in Denmark, conducting a comprehensive study of Dutch and Flemish artists became imperative.[104] This knowledge was indispensable for him, particularly when attributing works in the collections he examined and catalogued.[105]

Høyen's broader perspective on art museums can be gleaned from his extensive text from 1837, although focused on the Thorvaldsen Museum, it also incorporates considerations regarding museums in general. Above all, Høyen reiterates his viewpoint, initially expressed during the Italian journey, that "people began to pay attention to the changes and improvements that museums and galleries urgently required. Experience has eventually demonstrated that the

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[102] Niels Laurits Høyen, *Fortegnelse over Den Moltkeske Malerisamling* (Kjøbenhavn: Salomons Tryk, 1861), 5.

[103] Karl Madsen, ed., *Fortegnelse over Den Moltkeske Malerisamling* (København: Thiele Bogtrykkeri, 1900), 4.

[104] In the Royal Library can be found his extensive notes on artists, encompassing detailed biography entries and description of artworks. Especially: Niels Laurits Høyen, *Om nederlandsk kunst*, NKS 1553 folio, Kunsthistoriske samlinger, Royal Library, Copenhagen.

[105] Niels Laurits Høyen, *De nederlandske Malerskoler. Hoyens Forelasninger 1868-69*, NKS 3290 kvart, Royal Library, Copenhagen.
Høyen observed that Flemish and Dutch paintings form a significant portion of the collection at Christiansborg, with no other countries being as extensively represented. He also acknowledged that the presence of Dutch artists at the Copenhagen court since the 17th century and its influence on Danish art cannot be denied.

enjoyment is enhanced and facilitated when the collected works of art are thoughtfully organized and arranged according to a systematic scheme that can impose unity and coherence upon a disordered assemblage."[106] For Høyen, the matter of appropriate arrangement entails specific principles that he will also implement in the Gallery in Christiansborg. Høyen takes a minimalist approach in this regard, as he contends that ornamentation should be restrained, multiplicity of colours ought to be replaced with uniformity, proper lighting assumes paramount importance, and the presentation of paintings and sculptures should uphold symmetry while properly spacing and reducing the number of works to improve the perceptual conditions.[107]

Concerning the presentation of paintings, Høyen's exemplar was the Berlin Museum, of which he wrote: "The paintings [there] have been treated with the utmost care, and the Berlin Museum can serve as a model of reasonable and tasteful arrangement in the context of this art."[108] However, he was less convinced about the display of sculptures. In this regard, he argued that the arrangement of sculptures "is associated with the division into antiquity and modernity, and the rightly esteemed value of ancient works more frequently sparks the desire to create grandiose settings. […] Costly buildings have been erected for them, magnificent halls have been dedicated to their display, yet they are seldom positioned in a manner that allows for true appreciation. Certain parts of the Vatican Museum, [or] the chambers around the small courtyard in Belvedere, stand as delightful exceptions in this regard. [...] In Berlin, statues serve as decorations or placed within a long, low, dimly lit Gallery; [...] poor lighting similarly diminishes the impact of the esteemed collection in the Louvre. The new rooms in the British Museum do not suffer from this deficiency, and the magnificent Parthenon groups receive ample illumination from above; however, their artistic impact is entirely compromised by their placement against the light. In witnessing such occurrences with ancient sculptures, it becomes readily apparent that collections of contemporary sculpture face no better fate."[109]

However, Høyen does not confine himself to a critical examination but proceeds to articulate more specific recommendations concerning proper arrangement: "Different objects also possess their own demands. In the case of individual pictures that constitute a complete

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[106] Høyen, "Om Thorvaldsen," 1:293-295.

[107] Based on Høyen's notes from the Royal Library. Niels Laurits Høyen, Nøtesboger, NKS 1553 folio, Kunsthistoriske samlinger, Royal Library, Copenhagen.

[108] Høyen, "Om Thorvaldsen," 1:293-295.

[109] Ibidem.

whole, too strong contrasts in close proximity will diminish the impact and distort the perception. [For instance] Mercury thinking about murder does not harmonize well with Apollo amidst shepherds or Venus triumphantly displaying the apple. [...] In a collection of sculptures, it is very important that an eye is afforded as much repose as possible, with various impressions succeeding one another serenely and harmoniously [...]. It is the assorted and overloaded juxtapositions of ancient sculptures encountered in most museums that so readily compel the observer to merely glance at the statues and bas-reliefs."[110] Thus, just as the appropriate proximity and grouping of paintings are crucial, certain overarching principles should govern the exhibition of sculptures: "a statue must exist in a harmonious relationship with the surrounding space […]. If we place a significantly smaller one next to a colossal statue, an evident disproportion will arise because each of them demands observation from a distinct vantage point."[111] Høyen further advocates for employing proper lighting and wall colours, which serve to harmonize the relationship between the object and space: "The significance of lighting in enhancing artworks cannot be overstated; and the effect of this great advantage [...] entirely dependent on its proper use; […] a statue barely illuminated is as little pleasant as a picture when a dazzling glow rests on its surface. […] Another highly effective method for alleviating the colour monotony of plaster and marble involves creating a deliberate contrast between the statue and its background. […] We have garnered clear evidence that white on white has a detrimental, or rather, negligible effect, both here and in other instances."[112]

Based on his observations during the extensive travels, ranging from his youthful trip to Germany and Italy, to later visits to England, the Netherlands, and France, Høyen developed criteria for the most optimal presentation of objects within an art museum. His approach to object arrangement and museum space is remarkably modern, and aligns with the ongoing professionalization of museums, contributing to the emerging role of the curator. While it is challenging to identify another museologist in Denmark during that era who shared a similar approach, Høyen's simultaneous unrelenting advocacy of criteria for national art often led to conflicts that hindered the practical application of his museological expertise. For example, in the case of the Thorvaldsen Museum, despite Høyen's participation in the commission for its

[110] Ibidem, 301-305.

[111] Ibidem.

[112] Ibidem.

establishment and construction, along with his formulation of a plan for the arrangement of the painting collection, his proposal was never realized.[113]

Høyen was initially deeply engaged in discussions about the design of the museum. While describing his vision, he noted: "We envision a building constructed and designed to house all the casts of the models from his Roman workshop, as well as all the works in marble, clay, etc. [...] Architectural and pictorial decorations should be tastefully incorporated, lighting should be carefully planned, and various items should be arranged in both larger and smaller interconnected groups of representation to provide a comfortable home for all his art."[114] The museum's plans and designs also exemplify this clarity, as seen in drawings by Gustav Friedrich von Hetsch (1788–1864), which depict spacious interiors with statues displayed on pedestals, along with groupings of vases and paintings [fig. 36]. While the entire commission shared a consensus on the overarching vision, conflicts emerged when Høyen was assigned the task of arranging the Thorvaldsen's collection of paintings, which was formed between 1798 and 1838 in Rome, and comprised a diverse array of works by Italian, German, French, and Danish artists, with a predominant focus on genre paintings.[115] As Villads Villadsen highlights, Høyen approached the task with his characteristic critical rigor and embarked on a substantial reorganization of the collection, which varied significantly in terms of quality. While he held deep admiration for Thorvaldsen's artistic achievements, he had reservations about the artist's taste in contemporary art. Consequently, Høyen made a rigorous selection, retaining only 80 out of the 356 paintings in the final arrangement plan.[116] This decision stemmed from the fact that a significant portion of the paintings was by foreign artists, primarily portraying Italian subjects, while Høyen's preference leaned heavily towards works by Danish artists, especially those lined

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[113] In 1830, Thorvaldsen donated his works and collections to the city of Copenhagen, with the condition that a museum will be constructed to encompass the donation. Subsequently, in 1837, a commission was established to oversee the design of the museum.

[114] Johan Louis Ussing, *Niels Laurits Høyens Levned*, 271.

[115] Michael Thimann, "Art history and the legend of the artist in Bertel Thorvaldsen's painting collection," in *Echo room: Thorvaldsen, Willumsen, Jorn and their collections*, ed. Anne Gregersen (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2018), 71.

More on Thorvaldsen's painting collection was elaborated in: Nicolaus Lützhøft, "Thorvaldsens Malerisamling: Tyske og italienske Kunstnere," *Meddelelser fra Thorvaldsens Museum* (1931); Dyveke Helsted, "Thorvaldsen as a Collector," *Apollo* 96, 127 (1972); Bjarne Jornaes, "Bertel Thorvaldsen's Painting Collection," in Kasper Monrad, ed., *The Golden Age of Danish Painting* (Los Angeles: Hudson Hills Press, 1993).

[116] Villads Villadsen, *Statens Museum for Kunst: 1827-1952* (København: Gyldendal, 1998), 61.

up with his vision of national art. This sparked a heated discussion within the museum committee. While the other members believed that the collection should offer a more comprehensive portrayal to reflect Thorvaldsen's multifaceted identity as a Danish artist acclaimed on the world stage, Høyen held a different perspective. He contended that "if the core of the collection had to be lost in the mass of mediocrity," the museum's fundamental purpose would be compromised, and the inherent beauty and significance of Thorvaldsen's art would be greatly diminished.[117] Ultimately, Høyen chose to withdraw from the committee, feeling offended and believing that the project "had become too much of a mausoleum and too little of an art museum."[118] Nevertheless, based on the depictions of the museum interiors, the arrangement seems, to some extent, align with the principles Høyen espoused, as the objects were not densely clustered; instead, each occupied its designated space, encouraging unhurried contemplation. Furthermore, they were well-illuminated and arranged thematically [fig. 37, fig. 38].

Høyen's various endeavors in the museum field, including work on the thematically consistent Frederiksborg collection, cataloguing and attributing paintings for the Moltke collection, and involvement in discussions about Thorvaldsen's museum, provided him with opportunities to apply his skills as an art historian and museum inspector in practical settings. Although it demonstrates the expanding scope of Høyen's position in museum-related affairs, it was not until he was appointed an inspector at the Royal Picture Gallery in Christiansborg that he gained the unique opportunity to fully implement his concepts regarding art and museum arrangement.

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[117] Ibidem.

[118] Ibidem.

Fig. 13

Ditlev Martens, *The Hall of Antiquities at Charlottenborg*, 1821, oil on canvas, Thomas le Claire Kunsthand

Fig. 14

Constantin Hansen, *At Hage's, during a lecture by Høyen*, 1850, drawing, Statens Museum for Kunst

Fig. 15

Wilhelm Marstrand, *Art historian, professor N. L. Høyen*, 1868, oil on canvas, Statens Museum for Kunst

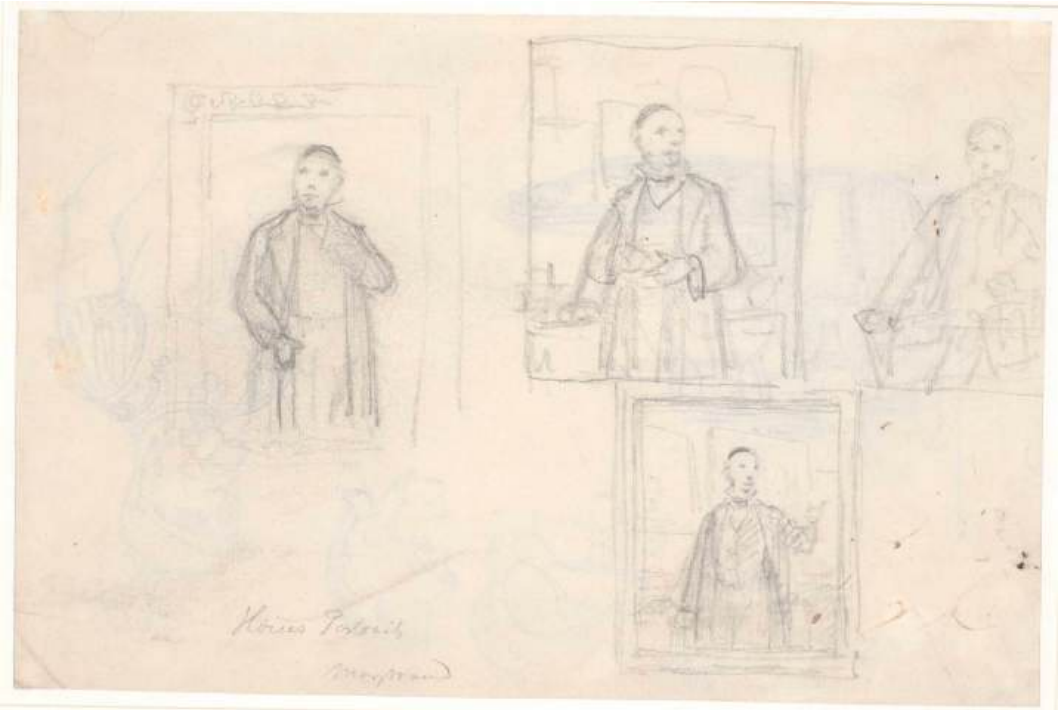

Fig. 16

Wilhelm Marstrand, Four drafts of the portrait of N.L. Høyen, drawing, 1868, KKS9406, Statens Museum for Kunst