

stand, der geradezu verpflichtet, die Sicherheit des kompositorischen Entwurfs unmittelbar auf der Leinwand zu betonen. Die häufig geäußerte Ansicht, Manets Schwäche sei der Bildaufbau gewesen, läßt sich nicht halten.

Die Zuordnung der Druckgraphik, die oft in verschiedenen, vorzüglich ausgewählten Zuständen präsentiert war, hatte auch den Vorteil, daß Manet als Radierer neben seinem malerischen Werk gezeigt werden konnte. Ein bedeutender Teil seiner Druckgraphik steht in unmittelbarem Zusammenhang mit einzelnen Gemälden. (Man ist zu Recht irritiert, warum sich die Katalogautoren nicht auf eine einheitliche Betitelung verständigen konnten. Während das Gemälde „Le gamin au chien“ (Nr. 6) benannt ist, wird für Radierung und Lithographie (Nr. 7—8) das Thema „Le gamin“ angegeben. Ähnlich irreführend Nr. 34 „Mlle. Victorine en costume d'espada“ und Nr. 35 „L'espada“.) Wenn er nicht Illustrationen für Bücher seiner Freunde Champfleury (Nr. 114, 117) und Mallarmé (Übersetzung von E. A. Poe, Nr. 151) anfertigte, versetzen seine druckgraphischen Blätter meist die Bildkompositionen in das andere Medium. Dieser Prozeß, bei dem der Reichtum an Farbabstufungen ins Hell-Dunkel überführt werden mußten, wurde vom Künstler oft durch Zeichnungen vorbereitet, deren präzise chronologische Einordnung — trotz der subtilen und im wesentlichen weiter gültigen Forschungen von de Leiris — noch in vielen Fällen umstritten geblieben ist.

Manche Fehler in der französischen sind in der amerikanischen Ausgabe des Kataloges korrigiert worden. Er wird ein nützliches Nachschlagewerk bleiben, zeichnet aber keine Perspektiven zukünftiger Forschung.

Thomas Gaegtens

C. W. ECKERSBERG OG HANS ELEVER (C. W. ECKERSBERG AND HIS PUPILS) — TEGNINGER AV C. W. ECKERSBERG (DRAWINGS BY C. W. ECKERSBERG)

Exhibitions in Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 2 January to 10 April 1983

Because of its striking originality, the Copenhagen School of painting of the early 19th century attracts growing attention from art historians. Thirty years of intensive research on the so-called Romantic period have mapped many of its tendencies and contradictions, and, breaking loose from a tradition of scholarship that was one-sidedly focused on the achievements of the „great“ centres of European art, in Italy, France, Germany and England, several scholars have come to include in their surveys of the art of the last century the activity that went on in the smaller, but fertile, milieus of the more peripheric countries. Thus, successively, Novotny (1960), Zeitler (1966) and Baumgart (1975) have pointed to the fascinating phenomenon of Danish painting which, from about 1810 to 1850, developed a Realism that „comes out of the air“ apparently un-influenced by the other European nuclei that practised the same tendency simultaneously, and grew

to a sizeable movement before it succumbed to the onslaught of bourgeois Romanticism. The initiator and bearer of this trend was Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, who studied under David in Paris before he went to Rome, where his Realist bent came to the fore in a series of small landscape paintings which he largely painted in the open air, in front of the motif. After his return to Copenhagen in 1816, he expressed his Realism mostly in marine pictures but also startlingly *plein-air* Danish landscapes came from his brush, and he handed down his discovery of nature to a group of very gifted younger artists who were his pupils at the Copenhagen Academy. To celebrate the bicentenary of his birth the Statens Museum for Kunst staged two large exhibitions, the first devoted to his and his pupils' paintings and sketches, the second, organized by the Print Room, is the first comprehensive display of his drawings.

Unlike most large-scale exhibitions today, the show in Statens Museum for Kunst was more presentational than problem-oriented, although much of the material found there was food for the thought for the initiated. The two handsome catalogues (in Danish, with no resumés in other languages) are produced for local consumption only and reflect very little of the research that has been pursued on "Guldalderen" ("The Golden Age", the Danish term for this particular period), its background and chief practitioners in order to see it in an international perspective. The introduction in the catalogue of the drawings pokes gentle fun at those who in the art of Eckersberg and his pupils see forerunners of the Realism that later in the 19th century pervaded European painting, while the catalogue of the paintings opens by revealing the presence of a current of strong anti-Eckersberg feelings among modern Danish painters who see in him only the spectre of reactionary traditionalism, and makes a plea for his rehabilitation. These are unexpectedly meek companion words for an exhibition that presents one of the innovators of European painting of the 19th century, a painter whose art poses perplexing questions concerning the milieu from which he sprang and in which he practised. That the school he initiated eventually ran into a blind alley, in contrast to the similar experiments in France and England which gave impetus of a lasting kind, does not reduce his stature. It gives, on the contrary, added dimensions to the art historical puzzle which he embodies. C. W. Eckersberg, in short, belongs to the European scene, where his figure epitomizes one main trend within the Romantic movement.

However, the will to see him first and foremost as a Danish painter which inspires this exhibition, is not without positive results. One is the stress that is laid on his figurative paintings, which with their singular version of Classicism have been virtually overshadowed by his marines and landscapes since Emil Hannover in 1898 extolled the latter in the first full publication of the master's oeuvre. This is the most complete presentation of this side of Eckersberg's art for several generations, and one that commands both fascination and curiosity, blended with an acceptance of it as a very independent version of David-inspired Neoclassicism. Many of his central works in this field were exhibited, from the detail-fixed

"Return of Ulysses" (Cat. no. 11, dated Paris 1812), a Davidian rhapsody, to the stupendous "Moses at the Red Sea" (Cat. no. 32, dated Rome 1814/16), in which the artist holds the totality in a firm grip, no doubt inspired by the balanced force and economy of expression of Thorvaldsen, his compatriot whose friendship he won during the Rome years. Likewise represented were a handful of his religious paintings, above all some of his altar pictures, which have recently been dealt with seriously (J. Kjaerboe, *Kunstmuseets Årsskrift*, 1975) for the first time since they were treated rather unkindly by early scholars. These paintings, "The Last Supper" (Cat. no. 79, dated 1839/40) and "Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery" (Cat. no. 80, dated 1843) to mention two of them, are invested with a compelling severity ('dryness' was the word reserved for them by earlier criticism) that must have found its inspiration in Protestant dogma of the time. Thus, the present exhibition did much to restore the importance of an overlooked part of Eckersberg's production. Even some of his less idealized nudes were included in the show (Cat. nos. 71, 72, dated 1837), after having in recent years been acquitted of the lasciviousness once attributed to them (A. Brenna, *Kunst og Kultur*, 1974). Altogether we are here presented with a view of Copenhagen Classicism which depicts it as a mature branch of an international style. The uncompromising fidelity with which Eckersberg clung to these ideals (seen above all in his remarkable portraits of which a fine series was shown in the exhibition) must be due to the figure and works of Thorvaldsen, whose presence was felt everywhere in Copenhagen even before he returned to his homeland in 1838, in the decoration of the new monumental buildings that rose there. However, the question — already posed by early research on Eckersberg — which the exhibition did very little to answer, is how Realism and Classicist Idealism could actually coexist within his oeuvre. This exhibition rules out more effectively than before that he was a frustrated realist who escaped from official art by way of his marines and landscapes. The versatility of this staunchly bourgeois artist is striking. He commanded two realms, and *why* he did it with such ease should stimulate scholarship. It is true that already in David's Classicism there is a basic Realist outlook, but it was never carried to the extreme as in Eckersberg's pictures of nature.

As to the latter category of his paintings, there was, as expected, a very good coverage of his landscape and marine art. The series of revolutionary Roman landscapes and church interiors from 1813—16 was well represented, as well as the Danish views, although the exclusion of the "View of Copenhagen from the Fort of Tre Kroner" (1836, Hannover no. 509) deprived the exhibition of one of the finest specimens of closely observed daylight within Eckersberg's whole oeuvre. The best of his marine paintings were all there, but once again I deplore the absence of a central work, "Frigate reefing its Topsails" (1836, Hannover no. 508) with its storm-lashed sea, which shows Eckersberg breaking out from another of the conventions of his times, how to depict the face of the ocean. With this picture he is a rediscoverer of the behaviour of waves, a point which leads us straight to the

scholarly problems that are connected to his Realist's attitude. What were the reasons for his empirical approach to the phenomena of nature? As stated above, the exhibition seems to avoid these larger problems, the discussion of which, however, is well launched within the Danish milieu (N. Winkel, *Naturstudiet i C. W. Eckersbergs marinemaleri*, 1976), where Eckersberg's involvement in the new natural sciences is being debated. Nor should it be forgotten that he is a contemporary of (and immediate precursor to) the invention of photography, that he used a *camera obscura* and obviously was immensely attracted by what he saw with the aid of this instrument.

The two exhibitions break new ground in several respects. In the section devoted to painting were presented a host of littleknown pupils of Eckersberg, many of whom of considerable interest, although none, apparently, were of the dimensions of a Köbke or a Bendz, to mention two among the many talents that adorned his school. Yet the charting of Eckersberg's influence has taken a great step forward. However, the inclusion of the many new names necessarily led to there being a too weak representation of that inner circle of pupils who most devotedly carried on his programme. A certain unbalance was felt here. In light of recent scholarship on the iconography of Realism, one missed in particular the pictures in which Eckersberg's pupils approached the new, modern themes of the day, i. e., family scenes at the table (P. C. Skovgaard, "Interior at Vejby", 1843) or in the garden (J. Roed, "Orchard with Old Baptismal Font", 1850; P. C. Skovgaard, "Ladies playing Shuttlecock", 1855); one of the few examples of this genre in the exhibition was P. V. C. Kyhn's unfinished "In the Arbour" (Cat. no. 162, *Abb.* 3). The catalogue is reticent about the fact that after 1850 most of his pupils left the path struck by their master and evolved different brands of Romantic idealism, thus a very important point about the limitations of the Eckersberg school is obscured.

The 144 drawings by the master exhibited by the Print Room, a great many of them illustrated in the catalogue, offered for the first time an insight into all phases of the work of this remarkable draughtsman. The catalogue is a must for all students of this period, the entries are scrupulous and exhaustive and link the drawings authoritatively to the paintings or prints for which they were preliminaries. Much attention is given to Eckersberg's geometric compositional system; here is, in fact, research into the principles which governed so much of his art and which he stated dogmatically in his theoretical work on linear perspective. Mr. Erik Fischer, who is the author of the catalogue, here ably adds another intriguing facet to the Eckersberg problem (*Abb.* 2).

Per Jonas Nordhagen