

# Christina Grummt Tracking Down Caspar David Friedrich's Sketchbooks

While working on the catalogue raisonné for the drawings of Caspar David Friedrich, I noticed again and again that many of the drawings which have survived as individual folios exhibit specific features suggesting that they originally formed part of a sketchbook. These features include, for example, a shared folio format, type of paper, shape of the corners, binding edge, watermark, and direction of the grain. In some cases, there will be abrasion marks indicating that the folios were leafed through frequently, as one would expect in a sketchbook. As things stand, roughly half of the circa 1,000 folios that make up Caspar David Friedrich's collected drawings can demonstrably be traced back to a source sketchbook, thus giving us a good idea of the key role sketchbooks played in the artist's output as a draftsman (Christina Grummt: Caspar David Friedrich. Die Zeichnungen – Das gesamte Werk, Munich 2011, passim).

The current body of sketchbooks by Caspar David Friedrich is proof that only six of the 20 sketchbooks he once owned have been preserved. All the other sketchbooks were taken apart (Grummt 2011, p. 377, No. 383; for simplicity's sake, these will be enumerated below as G 383, G 422, G 530, G 555, G 722, and G 812).

According to the inventory list prepared for the artist's estate in 1843, it still contained 14 sketchbooks at the time of this death. Of these, 12 sketchbooks comprised fewer than 24 sheets, whereas Sketchbooks No. 14 and No. 22 contained "49 sheets" and "46 sheets," respectively (Dickel 1991, p. 27; Börsch-Supan/Jähmig 1973, p. 219; Sumowski 1970, p. 245 et seq.). Hans Dickel had good reason to surmise that "One of these two books was probably the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch*, since this sketchbook passed into the collection of the Kunsthalle Mannheim directly from the estate." We are now in a position to narrow this hypothesis down even further: The number "14" is not found on any of the bound sketchbooks of Friedrich's that have come down to us – i.e. the *Karlsruher Skizzenbuch* of 1804 (G 383), the *Osloer Skizzenbuch* of 1806–1808 (G 422), the *Osloer Skizzenbuch* of 1807 (G 530), the *Osloer Skizzenbuch* of 1807–1812 (G 555), the *Osloer Skizzenbuch* of 1815 (G 722) and the *Osloer Skizzenbuch* of 1818 (G 812). But we can definitely make out the number "22," written in pencil by some third hand, on the upper left hand corner of the first folio of the *Osloer Skizzenbuch* of 1806–1808, the original cover of which is lost. Assuming, then, that Hans Dickel's hunch is correct, this means that the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch* must be none other than No. 14. And this in turn means that the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch* of 1800–1802 originally must have encompassed the aforementioned "49 sheets." We now have one of these sheets available to us for the very first time (G 260).

Just like other folios from the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch*, the one featured here contains several figure studies. In its upper half, we see two wanderers. Whether or not these really represent "two old peasants," as stated in the list prepared for the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch* by Andreas Aubert (on



Lot 56 recto



Caspar David Friedrich. Figurenstudien. 25 July 1801. From *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch*. (Grummt 262 recto). Pommersches Landesmuseum Greifswald

this, see Dickel 1991, pp. 6–7), is up for debate. The wandering rustics stand closely together; the one on the left is barefoot, clad in breeches, a shirt, short jacket, and pointed cap. He rests his right arm on a large walking stick while draping his left arm casually on his companion's right shoulder, so that his left foot stands tiptoe. The wanderer on the right wears top boots, long trousers, a floppy hat and, like his friend, a short jacket over a shirt. The second drawing on this sheet occupies its lower half and shows a woman in a floor-length dress holding a jug in front of her chest. The lower half of the folio's obverse side, meanwhile, features a man standing before a boulder, covering his face with his raised left arm while pointing at something with his index finger. He is wearing breeches, a shirt, and a short jacket (G 262 verso).

Executed in a brown sepia wash applied over pencilwork with pen and paintbrush, our folio is an early study of Friedrich's that appears closely related to other sheets in the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch*. Particularly striking is its resemblance to the folio *Figurenstudien* (G 262 recto, illustration), in which Friedrich also depicts a woman carrying a jug. Another kindred drawing is *Junge auf einem Felsen sitzend; sitzender Soldat* (G 261 recto, illustration), which was created on the same day as our folio. A stylistic resemblance can also be observed in *Abschiedsszene* (G 106 recto), a folio which Friedrich drew as early as 16 May 1799. Human figures are rare motifs in Friedrich's drawings and can be found mostly in his early work.

Dr. Christina Grummt earned her doctorate in 1999 at the Free University of Berlin with a dissertation on Adolph Menzel. In 2011, she published the catalogue raisonné for the drawings of Caspar David Friedrich. She works as an art historian and art expert, e.g. on the Advisory Board of the Kunsthau Zürich and for the Kunst Museum Winterthur-Reinhart am Stadtgarten.



Caspar David Friedrich. Junge auf einem Felsen sitzend; sitzender Soldat. 23 July 1801. From *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch*. (Grummt 261 recto). Pommersches Landesmuseum Greifswald

## 56 Caspar David Friedrich

Greifswald 1774 – 1840 Dresden

"Zwei wandernde alte Bauern, Frau mit Krug, langer Mann".  
1801

Pencil and pen in sepia ink, washed, on paper, two-sided. 18.7 × 11.8 cm (7 3/8 × 4 5/8 in.). "Zwei wandernde alte Bauern" dated lower left: den 2t Juni 1801. "Frau mit Krug" dated lower left: den 23t Juli 1801. "Langer Mann" dated in the lower centre: den 23t Juli 1801. Inscribed by another hand in pencil on the reverse: CD Friedrich. Catalogue raisonné: Grummt 260. For Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch see Grummt 240. Accompanied by a certificate by Dr. Christina Grummt, Bülach (CH) (in preparation). Pale time staining. [3312]

### Provenance

Estate of the artist (until 1916 Harald Friedrich, Hanover) / Kunsthalle Mannheim (acquired from the above-mentioned) / Richard von Kühlmann, Berlin (acquired 1920 of above-mentioned) / Private Collection, Southern Germany

EUR 50,000–70,000  
USD 54,900–76,900

### Literature and illustration

Andreas Aubert: Liste mit den Blättern des Kleinen Mannheimer Skizzenbuches, May 1906, printed in: Hans Dickel: Die Zeichnungen und Aquarelle des 19. Jahrhunderts der Kunsthalle Mannheim, vol. III. Caspar David Friedrich und seine Zeit. Zeichnungen der Romantik und des Biedermeier. Weinheim, VCH, Acta humaniora, 1991, p. 4–11, here p. 6–7, no. 16 („a. Zwei wandernde alte Bauern b. Frau mit Krug ... Lang, Rückseitig langer Mann ... [...] ...“) / Hans Dickel: Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch. In: Hans Dickel: Die Zeichnungen und Aquarelle des 19. Jahrhunderts der Kunsthalle Mannheim, vol. III. Caspar David Friedrich und seine Zeit. Zeichnungen der Romantik und des Biedermeier. Weinheim, VCH, Acta humaniora, 1991, p. 2–41 / Helmut Börsch-Supan: Caspar David Friedrich. Gefühl als Gesetz. Munich, Berlin, 2008, p. 127–128

That this important folio derived from the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch* has surfaced as part of the estate of Dr. Richard von Kühlmann (1873–1948) is a stroke of good fortune, and is intimately tied to the story of Caspar David Friedrich's "rediscovery" in the early 20th century.

Richard von Kühlmann, who served as Imperial Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1917 until 1918, was a knowledgeable art connoisseur and collector. In November of 1943, a bombing raid destroyed his Berlin residence on Tiergartenstrasse, along with his distinguished library and trove of precious paintings, hand drawings, and autographs. Unfortunately, only portions of the collection had been moved in time into safe storage at Ramholz Castle and at von Kühlmann's second home in Ohlstadt, Upper Bavaria.

Our particular folio originates from a sketchbook of Caspar David Friedrich's which the Kunsthalle Mannheim acquired in 1916 and later sold off sheet by sheet. This nurtured the supposition that von Kühlmann purchased it from there, especially in view of his life-long friendship and collaboration in all things artistic with the Kunsthalle's long-time director Dr. Fritz Wichert (1878–1951), who later was to head the Städelschule in Frankfurt. The historian Markus Bussmann, who is currently working on a biography of von Kühlmann and recently published a scientific edition of the first version of his memoirs, explains that the two men met and became fast friends during von Kühlmann's diplomatic posting in the Netherlands (1915–1916). It was not until 1919 that Wichert resumed his duties as director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim, which function had been vacant during World War I. He would go on to advise von Kühlmann on his collecting efforts and for a time even served as his "private secretary." A letter from Wichert in October 1918 expresses the respect that characterized the relationship: "That you are now thinking of me more often and are inviting me to participate in this or that business matter makes me happy indeed. The more often you decide to do so, the more thankful I shall be." These dealings included, for example, negotiations with "our old friend Liebermann" and with Paul Cassirer's art salon regarding a portrait of von Kühlmann, and the conclusion of an agreement to publish a selection of handwritten poems by Rilke and illustrations by Max Slevogt which von Kühlmann was sponsoring.

In 1920, Wichert was instructed to bid on von Kühlmann's behalf at the Wittgenstein Auction for certain drawings. Insofar as the Kunsthalle Mannheim should be willing to sell some of the works it owned, Wichert had been asked to think of von Kühlmann "before anyone else" and to proffer these to him. A possible reference to the purchase of the folio taken from the *Kleines Mannheimer Skizzenbuch* can be found in a letter that Wichert sent to von Kühlmann on 25 June 1920 from Mannheim: "Today, I am sending to you, by registered mail, five folios acquired at auction on your behalf at the Wittgenstein Auction held at Bangel's, together with four drawings by Caspar David Friedrich which the Kunsthalle possibly might let you have out of its non-inventorized holdings [...] The large Caspar David Friedrich folio is to cost 250 marks and each of the small ones 150 marks. Each and every one of them is charming." MH



Recto



Verso