

Press release A true sensation: Caspar David Friedrich's *Karlsruher Skizzenbuch von 1804* will headline the November 30th sale at Grisebach – the very first time one of his sketchbooks will be offered at auction



Caspar David Friedrich. "Karlsruher Skizzenbuch". 1804. Original sketchbook. 20 sheets, 33 pages of which with drawings in pencil, partially washed with sepia ink. 18.4 x 11.8 cm. Provenance: Estate of the artist Georg Friedrich Kersting (died 1847, by descent to the present owner). EUR 1,000,000 - 1,500,000. Offered as part of the "Selected Works" auction on 30th November 2023.

- **Estimate: EUR 1 to 1.5 million**
- **The artist's first sketchbook ever offered at auction**
- **Part of a family collection for 200 years and the only known sketchbook in private hands**
- **Comparable works in museums in Dresden and Oslo**
- **Sale at Grisebach, Berlin on 30th November 2023 at 6 p.m.**

Grisebach is delighted to present Caspar David Friedrich's *Karlsruher Skizzenbuch von 1804* – the very first time a complete sketchbook by the artist will be offered at auction. It is the last of the known sketchbooks to be in private hands. Of the twenty bound sketchbooks that probably existed, only six survive. Four of them, are held by the National Museum in Oslo, while a fifth forms part of the collection of the Kupferstichkabinett in Dresden. Created between 1802 and 1806 – a period regarded as the most important years for the artist's creative development – their pages regal the viewer with a wealth of visual impressions Friedrich recorded during his walks through Dresden and its surroundings.

GRISEBACH

Fasanenstrasse 25, 10719 Berlin
T +49 30 885915 0, F +49 30 88241 45, auktionen@grisebach.com
grisebach.com

From April 25th until June 1st, 1804, this was the sketchbook the artist would slip into the pockets of his travelling coat again and again. It is referred to as the Karlsruher Skizzenbuch because that is the city where it was held ever since passing into the hands of Georg Friedrich Kersting during Friedrich's lifetime or shortly after his death. Kersting was a fellow painter and close friend who created the most important portraits of Caspar David Friedrich. His descendants have preserved the sketchbook in their private collection for nearly two centuries.

Drawings record the origins of the inspiration for later paintings. This holds particularly true for Caspar David Friedrich, the "inventor of the symbolist landscape," as the Dresden art historian Hans Joachim Neidhardt put it. An uncompromising innovator of German landscape painting, Friedrich played a key role in the dawning of European Romanticism, the harbinger, better yet: the radical manifestation of the paradigm shift that would culminate in Modernism. These drawings afford us the most intimate insights into the thoughts and imagination of an epochally seminal artist seeking to conceive his images. What was it that caught his attention? Which motifs did he select, what sections did he choose for his work? "*The sketchbook allows us to see through Friedrich's own eyes: lone trees and copses, trunks drawn as if dissected by his pencil, delicate landscapes and village vistas, distant horizons and broad expanses, careful studies of ships and clouds and birds on the wing.*" (Anna Ahrens, Head of Department 19th Century Art at Grisebach)

The Karlsruher Skizzenbuch accompanied Friedrich nearly his entire life. Even years later, he would return to it, transferring motifs into his painted worlds. One of them is the famous oak tree on page 9, which he used in three of his main works: In the left foreground of the early *Hünengrab im Schnee* (1806/7, Dresden State Art Collections), to the right of the ruin in *Abtei im Eichwald* (1809/10, Berlin State Museums, Old National Gallery), and as a defining element in the foreground to the right in the large-scale

Klosterfriedhof im Schnee from 1817/19 (which was destroyed during World War II). In summary, we are looking at an object whose significance for the artist's creative process can hardly be exaggerated.

Dr. Christina Grummt, author of the catalogue raisonné of the drawings by Caspar David Friedrich:

"The 'Karlsruher Skizzenbuch von 1804' – a milestone among Friedrich's graphic works – will inspire and enrich future research into Germany's most famous Romantic artist."

Daniel von Schacky,
Managing Partner at Grisebach:

"This little booklet is full of magic. A revelation. From the very first instant, you sense how unique it is. It is a great honour for all of us at Grisebach to be allowed to offer an item of such rarity, museum-level quality, and extraordinary provenance. We know this will excite private collectors and institutions alike."

Grisebach will exhibit the *Karlsruher Skizzenbuch* of Caspar David Friedrich at the following locations:

Zürich

26th October to 8th November 2023

On the occasion of the exhibition:

"... um das zu sein, was ich bin"

Caspar David Friedrich und der Aufbruch in die Romantik. Meisterwerke aus Privatbesitz.

Grisebach Switzerland

Bahnhofstrasse 14, 8001 Zurich

Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, 28th October 2023, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

New York

11th to 15th November 2023

By prior arrangement only

Berlin

22nd to 29th November 2023

Grisebach, Fasanenstrasse 25

Auction in Berlin on 30th November 2023 at 6 p.m.