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A portrait of Lessing by Hübner for Cincinnati

Didier Rykner — Tuesday 25 July 2023 — All the versions of this article: English , français

25/7/23 - **Acquisition - Cincinnati Art Museum** - The Cincinnati Art Museum is adding to its rich collection of nineteenth-century European paintings a portrait of the German painter Karl Friedrich Lessing by his fellow painter Rudolf Julius Benno Hübner. Acquired from the Roman gallery Antonacci Lapicciarella Fine Art, it is the first work by the artist to join the American museum, which on the other hand retains a significant number of paintings and, above all, drawings by the model who was one of the leading exponents of the Düsseldorf School.



Rudolf Julius Benno Hübner (1806-1882)
Portrait du peintre Karl Friedrich Lessing
Huile sur toile appliquée sur carton - 30 x 24 cm
Cincinnati, Cincinnati Art Museum
Photo : Antonacci Lapicciarella Fine Art

👁 See the image in its page

Largely unknown outside Germany, this school was the subject of a major retrospective organised by the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf in 2012 (see article), which did not fail to recall its scale: between 1819 and 1918, no fewer than 4,000 artists, including 700 of foreign origin - Scandinavians, Americans, Russians, Dutch, Belgians, Swiss, Poles - trained there. Cincinnati also has a graphic collection of almost 600 drawings and prints by Caspar Scheuren, an exact contemporary of Lessing and Hübner, from the Düsseldorf School.

According to the precise information provided to us by Peter Jonathan Bell, curator of European Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings at the Cincinnati Art Museum, whom we would like to thank, the large number of works by Lessing that have been conserved form part of the historical core of the museum's collections. Joseph Longworth, one of the founders and first president of the Cincinnati Art Museum, created in 1881, was close to the German artist, whom he met in Düsseldorf in the late 1850s. In addition to the hundred or so drawings he bought from him at the time, he acquired the contents of his studio after his death in 1880. He donated this collection of over 800 drawings and several paintings to the museum in 1882.

As the Antonacci Lapicciarella Fine Art gallery points out, another portrait of Lessing by Hübner is known, held by the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin. Dated 1839, it is a group portrait (https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/963958/die-maler-carl-friedrich-lessing-carl-ferdinand-sohn-und-theodor-hildebrandt?language=de&question=H%C3%BCbner&limit=15&sort=relevance&controls=none&collectionKey=NG*&collectionKey=NGAlteNationalgalerie&objIdx=5) depicting three painters from the Düsseldorf School, Lessing on the left, Karl Ferdinand Sohn in the centre and Ferdinand Theodor Hildebrandt on the right. The portrait in Cincinnati could also be dated to around 1839, as the sitter's features differ little except for the beard in addition to the long moustache. Another representation of Lessing is cited in the gallery's notice, his *Self-Portrait* offered for sale by Van Ham in Cologne in November 2018.

— *Didier Rykner*

Keywords

Cincinnati Art Museum - Acquisitions - Rudolf Julius Benno Hübner (1806-1882) - Carl Friedrich Lessing (1808-1880)
